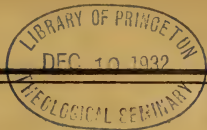


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✓  
LECTURES ON THE PUBLIC PSALMODY OF THE CHURCH.—

BY ✓

I.

WILLIAM LINDSAY ALEXANDER, D.D.

THE

SCOTTISH  
CONGREGATIONAL  
MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1848.

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# THE SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1848.

## LECTURES ON THE PUBLIC PSALMODY OF THE CHURCH.

### LECTURE I.—PSALMODY OF THE HEBREWS.

I HAVE announced my intention of delivering a short course of Lectures on that part of public worship which consists in “praising the name of the Lord in a song.” Now there are *two* aspects under which such a subject might be treated. The one of these may be styled *scientific*; and under it the object of the expositor must be to investigate those principles, and lay down those rules of poetical and musical composition by which excellence in this department is determined. The subject under this aspect, however, lies wholly out of my province, and beyond my power. I make no pretensions to any acquaintance with music as a science, and if I possessed such knowledge to the full, I should still deem it unbecoming the place in which I now stand, to make either this or the principles of poetical criticism, the theme of my address.

The other aspect under which this subject may be viewed, I would style the *practical*. Here the object of the expositor is to show how this part of public service has been conducted in the church of God in former times;—what are the uses and advantages of it to the church in that great work to which she is called;—and what are the conditions under which this exercise ought to be conducted, so as to secure the benefits it is designed to convey. The field here spread out, is plainly one on which the christian pastor, as such, may legitimately enter—nay, which he is bound, as part of his proper province, to occupy and explore. As the party on whom it devolves to conduct the devotions of the congregation, the subject is one with which he ought to be acquainted; and as in these devotions he asks and ought to receive the concurrence of the whole congregation, it is one on which he is bound to give such instruction as may guide his people to an intelligent and acceptable service. It is to this theme, therefore, that I propose to call your attention in these Lectures; and the first branch of it on which I enter, is the *Historical*.

I pass by, as of little value and satisfactoriness, all inquiries into the  
NEW SERIES.—VOL. VIII.

*original* of sacred song; nor will I dwell upon those brief notices of the use of this which occur in the scriptural narrative of the patriarchal ages—interesting as, in many respects, these are.\* I advance at once to the point where the subject opens upon us clearly and fully in the history of the Jewish State. Here we shall find abundant material for profitable research and meditation.

The Hebrews appear from the earliest period of their history, as a nation, to have been a highly musical people. Even during the cruel and crushing bondage of Egypt, they found time to cultivate the musical art, and probably they borrowed from their taskmasters, some of those instruments, in the use of which they afterwards excelled. We have the testimony of the author of the wisdom of Solomon, to the fact, that whilst the Israelites were suffering in Egypt, “the righteous children of good men did sacrifice secretly,” and that “the fathers *already sung forth praises.*”† It is true that this is the testimony of an apocryphal writer, but in it we have the *tradition* of his nation, and there can be little doubt that, in such a case, tradition would be a faithful chronicler. Besides, we have the corroborative fact, that when the Israelites fled from Egypt, they not only carried musical instruments with them, but were able to take part in that magnificent song, in which, upon the banks of the Red Sea, they celebrated their own escape and the destruction of their tyrannous oppressors—a song in which the men followed Moses with the voice, while Miriam and the women, with timbrels in their hands, struck in, ever and anon, with the triumphant response,

“Sing ye to the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously,  
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

We read also of the frequent use of music, by the Hebrews, in the times immediately succeeding this; such as, when they erected the golden calf as the symbol of Jehovah, and surrounded it with *singing*;‡ when Deborah and Barak united in their song of victory over the enemies of Israel;§ when the congregation of Israel was assembled by the sound of the silver trumpets; and on various other occasions, both of a festive and a warlike kind. We have evidence also of the use of music by them, for the purpose of producing effects of a soothing or elevating nature on the mind; as in the case of Saul, whose melancholy mental disorder found no relief except from the strains of David’s harp;|| and in the case of the prophet, who demanded a minstrel, that by the melody of his strains he might be excited into a fit state for receiving a message from the Lord.¶ Music was also much used by the Jews on occasions of *sorrow*. When Josiah, king of Judah, died, we are told that “Jeremiah lamented for him; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and, behold, they are written in the Lamentations;”\*\*\* from which it may be inferred, that in the book of

\* The reader who is curious on this subject, will find much to gratify him in Mr. Binney’s exquisite Treatise, entitled “The Service of Song in the House of the Lord.” London: 1848.

† Ch. xviii. 9.

‡ 1 Sam. xvi. 14—23.

§ Exo. xxxii. 18.

¶ 2 Kings iii. 15.

§ Judg. v.

\*\* 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.

Lamentations we have the words of those funeral chants, which Jeremiah composed, to be performed with the aid of music, by professional musicians, as we should call them, at the obsequies of king Josiah, and that from that time forward, this mode of bewailing the dead became habitual and statutory in Israel. In the prophecies of Jeremiah, and in those of others of the ancient prophets, there are allusions to this practice. For instance, in speaking of the overthrow of Moab, Jeremiah says, "My heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres,"\* where the pipe is referred to, because it was the instrument used at funerals, and upon mournful occasions. So in the days of our Lord, when he went to the house of Jairus, whose daughter was supposed to be dead, he found it full of "minstrels," as our version calls them, but more properly players on the pipe, (*αὐλητάς*;) who were employed, doubtless, to aid the people in their lamentations for the dead.† In the writings of Amos, we find another instance of this: "they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing;"‡ on which Dr. Henderson has the following note: "The persons here spoken of as 'skilled in wailing,' were mourners by profession, who were hired for the occasion, and sung doleful tunes around the corpse of a deceased person, which they preceded when it was carried to the grave."§ It is to them Solomon alludes when he speaks of the "mourners that go about the streets,"|| and it is of them that Jeremiah speaks when he says, "call for the mourning women that they may come, and send for cunning (*i.e.* skilful) women that they may come, and let them make haste and take up a wailing for us,"¶ &c. It is probable from this that the persons chiefly employed on such occasions were females, and there is every reason to believe that the Jewish women, from the days of Miriam downward, especially excelled in this art. Inspiration has preserved the triumphal song of Deborah; the graceful and matronly chant of Hannah; the touching incident of the daughter of Jephtha coming forth with joyful step to greet her father on his return from battle with timbrel and dances, little dreaming of the agony which the sight of her caused to him; and the jubilant anthem of the maids and mothers of Israel who, to meet David and Saul returning from the overthrow of the Philistines and the destruction of Goliath, came out of all the cities of Israel with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music, and, as they played, answered one another with the voice of song, saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."\*\* And when Saul had fallen ingloriously upon the mountains of Gilboa, and David, forgetful of all former injuries, and superior to every feeling of retaliation, employed that gift which had once charmed the monarch's misery, to bewail in fitting terms his untimely loss, it was "to the daughters of Israel" he appealed especially to join him in mourning the departed "beauty of Israel slain upon the high places." On festive occasions, also, women were wont to put forth their musical talents for the amusement or exhilaration of the guests; and hence Solomon, in his mad quest after

\* Jer. xlviii. 36.

† Matt. ix. 23.

‡ Amos v. 16.

§ Minor Prophets, p. 157.

|| Eccles. xii. 5.

¶ ix. 16.

\*\* 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7.

the chief good in carnal pleasure, failed not to surround himself with "singing women" as well as "singing men, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts."\* Indeed, music seems to have been a regular attendant upon the festive meetings of the Jews. Isaiah refers to the prevalence of it in his days, when he says, "and the harp and the viol, and the tabret and pipes, and wine, are in their feasts;"† and when he would describe circumstances of great public calamity, he does so by saying that "the mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the joy of the harp ceaseth;"‡ these were instruments for seasons of gladness and mirth: but when disaster, grief, and darkness came, then the shrill wail of the pipe, and the sorrowful chant of the daughters of mourning were alone proper to be heard. On such occasions of public festivity as the designation or coronation of a king, music was largely employed. Thus at Solomon's designation to his office as the successor of David, when Zadok had anointed him, and due proclamation of his dignity had been made, "all the people came up after him; and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them;"§ and when Joash was crowned king, "all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets; and also the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise."|| Thus with this remarkable people, the voice of mirth and the voice of sadness was alike the voice of song. In the resources of poetry and music, they sought an utterance for the one and an assuagement of the other. Amid the exultation of triumph, and the sorrows of defeat, in the quietude of domestic felicity, or amid the festivities of social intercourse, in the season when hope looked joyfully along the vista of the future, or when grief hung its pall upon the fading splendours of the past, when kings ascended the throne, when the bride entered the house of her husband on the day of her espousals, when warriors returned from victory, or when the mighty fell on the high places, and the weapons of war perished—alike in shade and in sunshine, in quiet and in tumult, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death, it was to *music*—alone or "wedded with immortal verse"—that they turned as the fitting vehicle by which to express their emotions. So famed were they and their songs, that, when they were carried into exile, their captors required of them mirth, saying, "sing one of the songs of Zion." But this was more than they could do. When their holy and beautiful house was in ruins, when the city of their father's sepulchres was lying in heaps, when the ways of Zion were mourning because none went up with pipe to her solemn feasts, "when their sanctuary was laid waste, their altar broken, their temple destroyed, their psaltery laid on the ground, and their song put to silence;" how could they sing the songs of the Lord in that strange and cruel land? No; they hanged their harps upon the willows, and wept by the rivers of Babylon when they remembered Zion. Yet even then the spirit of song did not desert them. It mingled its plaintive notes with the murmur of the streams by which they sat. Its harp-tones sounded softly and soothingly from amidst the whispering willows. And when at length the hour of their emancipation arrived, and they set their faces once more towards the land of their fathers, it burst forth

\* Eccles. ii. 8    † v. 12.    ‡ xxiv. 8.    § 1 Kings i. 4.    || 1 Chron. xxiii. 13.



in a full and buoyant tide, till the air rung again with the jubilant melody, and the enemies who had oppressed them stood aside with fear. No voice was silent, no skilled hand was idle then. "The virgin rejoiced in the dance, yea, young men and old together, for their mourning was turned into joy, and sorrow was exchanged for songs." Again they sang as in the days of their youth, with voice and instrument. "The singers went before and the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels." They "came to Zion with songs and with joy upon their heads." It was a season of boundless jubilee and ceaseless music:—a type and foreshadowing of that still more glorious season, when the true Israel, gathered from all the lands into which it has been scattered, shall come in numbers such as no man can number to the heavenly Zion, there to stand on the holy mount with the Lamb, and "amid the voice of harpers harping with their harps," to sing the new song which only they can sing before the throne.

Such being the taste and talent of the Jews for song and music, it is natural to expect that they would largely employ the aid of these in their religious services. How far they did so, however, anterior to the time of David, we have no means of accurately determining. Some of the instances already adduced, such as the song of Moses, the song of Hannah, &c., come under the head of sacred song, inasmuch as they were intended to express grateful and pious feeling towards God; and from the use of singing in the worship which the Israelites were rendering to Jehovah under the image of the golden calf when Moses descended from the mount, we may perhaps infer that singing formed a regular part of that worship which they had been accustomed to render to God as an invisible object of adoration. We find, also, that in the days of Samuel sacred music and song formed part of the studies pursued in the prophetic colleges, and that in this the prophets were often aided by especial Divine inspiration. Thus Samuel told Saul, when giving him directions for his journey, after he had anointed him to be king over Israel, that when he came to the city of Bethel, he should "meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them," and that they should prophesy. It happened as the prophet foretold; "Saul came to the hill, and, behold, a company of the prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied with them," *i.e.*, joined in their sacred and inspired music.\* At a somewhat later period, when David brought up the ark of the Lord from Kirjath-jearim to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, the ceremony was accompanied with a pomp of music: "All Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harp, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets."† And again when the ark was removed

\* 1 Samuel x. 5—10; comp. also xix. 20, 24. In the Targum, the word rendered in our version "prophesied," (נִבְּאָה) is explained by a word which signifies "praised," (רָאָה), which shows the sense in which the ancient Jews understood the expression. Comp. 1 Chron. xxv. 3. See, for further information about the musical studies of the prophets, Lowth, *Prælectiones de Sac. Poesi Heb.* Pr. xviii.; Knobel's *Prophetismus der Hebräer*, i. 62, &c.

† 1 Chron. xiii. 8.

from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem, a still more magnificent and formal service of music attended the ceremony. David assembled of the children of Aaron and of the Levites 862, and required their chiefs to divide them into classes for the purpose of conducting the music, and to assign to each class a particular instrument, selecting the most skilful to sing with the voice. This was accordingly done, and "thus all Israel brought up the ark with the sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps."\* The use of music on this occasion is the more deserving of being noted, as it seems to authorize the conclusion, that already music formed part of services peculiarly religious and solemn. None could be more so than the removing of the ark—the place of Jehovah's dwelling in the midst of his people; and of this David and his attendants had an awful admouition in the death of Uzzah, when, with unauthorized hand, he attempted to steady the ark upon the cart. Had the use of song and music been equally unauthorized, we may rest assured it would have been as emphatically repudiated by God, who, for purposes of the most important kind, fenced off, by the most pointed denunciations, all merely human devices from his service. But not only was no such token of the divine disapprobation given, but it is expressly stated that the arrangements made by David for the second removal of the ark, and in which, as we have seen, music occupied a still more important part than in the first, were made after he had spent some time in the most careful inquiries as to the authorized mode of doing such an act; so that there can be little doubt but that from the first institution of the Levitical service music formed a part of it. What confirms this is, that at this time David found no difficulty in procuring a choir of no fewer than 862 performers among the sons of Levi, and these seem to have been all trained men, at any rate men under regular leaders, with a master of the song, or general conductor, at their head. It is interesting to observe, also, that David signalled this event, by making it the occasion of delivering a psalm into the hands of Asaph and his brethren, whom he now, for the first time, appointed to conduct this part of the public worship of God.† Whether, as some have supposed, this was the first psalm David ever composed, for the service of the sanctuary, is very doubtful; certain it is that many of his psalms which were actually used in the public worship of God, were composed before this period. But of this there can be no doubt, that on that memorable day on which the ark was brought to Jerusalem, amidst peals of music, and the shouts of the rejoicing hosts of Israel, David, for the first time, committed the charge of the songs of the Lord into the hand of that distinguished poet and musician, whose name is embalmed with his own in the grateful recollection of the people of God in all subsequent ages of the church.

Himself a poet and musician of the very highest order, it was natural for David to turn his thoughts and efforts to the arrangement and completion of the sacred music of his nation. It was not, however, by the mere impulse of his own taste and genius that he was led to undertake those large arrangements in this matter which we find he accomplished. The thousands who were then appointed to conduct the public

\* 1 Chron. xv. 28.

† 1 Chron. xvi. 7.

psalmody of the Jewish Church, with all the divisions and subdivisions under which they were placed, as well as the whole of that splendid ceremonial of which they formed a part, were of *divine appointment*. After the lesson he had received in the matter of Uzzah, David would not have dared to appoint a single singer or song or instrument for the service of God, except what he knew was accordant with God's will. And hence it is expressly stated by the historian, that the Levites who were set in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, were so placed, not only according to the commandment of David, but also "according to that of Gad, the king's seer, and Nathan, the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets."\* The arrangement which thus, in obedience to the divine command, David carried into effect, was upon the highest scale of magnificence. Not fewer than 4000 persons, some of whom were females, were selected to perform by voice and instrument; over these were placed 288 principal singers, divided into 24 courses of 12 in each; to each of these its competent leader was appointed; and over the whole presided the great masters of song, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. All these according to stated order, and at their appointed times, ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing.

This continued "until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem." After that the scheme, so magnificently planned by David, was suitably carried out by his son, in that splendid temple, which he was privileged to build for the worship of Jehovah. At the dedication of this building, a noble opportunity occurred for a display of the powers of sacred music, and it was not neglected by the wise monarch. On that auspicious day, the whole musical force of the nation was assembled, to the number, we are told by Josephus, of 200,000. It is probable that this is an exaggeration, but when we consider the immense preparations that were made for this ceremony, we may readily admit that the number of musicians collected, would be unusually great. From the sacred historian we learn, that the august services of the day commenced with music. No sooner was the ark conducted to its place, than "the Levites who were singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets." And as the sweet and pealing tide of their music rose up and filled the house, God himself gave response to their song. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one," (when they had reached the full swell and harmony of their blended notes,) "to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAD FILLED THE HOUSE OF GOD." Here was the true triumph of Music—a triumph which casts into the shade all that fiction has ever conceived, or poetry ever sung. We have

\* 2 Chron. xxix. 25.

read of music moving the beasts of the field, the trees of the forest, and the fishes of the deep; and we have heard of it raising men to the honours of Deity, and recalling spirits from the realms of death; but how poor in conception, as well as faint in impressiveness, are these *fables* of antiquity when placed before the *fact* so simply and briefly detailed in the passage I have read? To think of God himself descending in the emblems of his visible majesty, to hallow the song which mortals were raising to his praise! To think of mere human music drawing down the Deity to earth, till those who uttered it were wrapt in the cloud of his glory, and their voices were hushed to silence amid its awful folds!

The erection of the temple afforded ample scope for the most extensive arrangements in regard to the musical part of the Jewish worship. Here all that David had planned for "the service of song in the house of the Lord," was fully and fitly carried out. Here as the smoke of each morning and evening sacrifice ascended to heaven, it was borne upward amid the loud hallelujahs of the multitude, and the thrilling music of psaltery and harp. Here when the day of Rest came round, and all sounds of human labour were stilled, and the quiet of a holy expectation hung over the sacred city, the notes of joyful and grateful adoration would ever and anon break forth, sweeping over the silent dwellings of Israel like a sudden gush of sun-light, awaking a congenial emotion in every pious bosom, and calling forth a joyful response from every pious household. And when the great feast-days came,—when Israel remembered how the Lord had wounded Rahab, broken the chains of their bondage, and delivered them out of Egypt, or when they gathered to offer thanks for the fruits of the earth in the time of harvest, or when they commemorated their passing through the wilderness when they dwelt in tents, and Jehovah fed them with bread from heaven—with what full and jubilant tone did the choirs of the temple resound to the hymns and hallelujahs of the people!

At all times the piety of the nation, and the psalmody of the nation, went together. As the one declined or rose, the other fell or flourished. When wicked or idolatrous princes ascended the throne, the sweet music of the temple was silenced by the shouts of revelry, or the senseless repetitions and discordant cries of heathen superstition. On the other hand, when pious monarchs set about the reformation of the national religion, they were especially careful to restore to the musical service of the temple its due order and importance.\* At the time also of the restoration of the temple-service by Ezra after the captivity, every care was taken that the psalmody should be placed in its original perfection; the singers were exempted from all tolls and taxes; a certain daily portion was allotted to them levied from all Israel; and when the temple was rebuilt and dedicated, their services were put in requisition as at the consecration of the former temple by Solomon.† These facts are worth noticing were it for nothing else than the evidence they afford of the close connection between superior psalmody and elevated devotion.

\* See 2 Chron. xxix. 25, 31; xxx. 21; xxxv. 15.

† Ezra vii. 24; Neh. xi. 23; xii. 47; Ezra xii. 27, 28.

Of the *materials* of the Jewish psalmody much might be said, but as these have been preserved to us in the book of Psalms, it is unnecessary to dwell upon this point. I content myself with the following eloquent and just tribute to their excellence, extracted from a work to which I have been much indebted in preparing this lecture:—"As to their *form*, they include all varieties of lyric composition; they are of every character as to the nature of their subjects; and of all shades and colours of poetic feeling; but as to their *essence*, they are as a light from heaven, or an oracle from the sanctuary:—they discover secrets, Divine and human; they lay open the Holy of Holies of both God and man, for they reveal the hidden things belonging to both, as the life of the One is developed in the other. The Psalms are the depositories of the mysteries, the record of the struggles, the wailing when worsted, the pæans when triumphant, of that life. They are the thousand-voiced heart of the church, uttering from within, from the secret depths and chambers of her being, her spiritual consciousness—all that she remembers, experiences, believes; suffers from sin and the flesh, fears from earth or hell, achieves by heavenly succour, and hopes from God and His Christ. They are for all time. They never can be outgrown. No dispensation, while the world stands and continues what it is, can ever raise us above the reach or the need of them. They describe every spiritual vicissitude, they speak to all classes of minds, they command every natural emotion. They are penitential, jubilant, adorative, deprecatory; they are tender, mournful, joyous, majestic;—soft as the descent of dew; low as the whisper of love; loud as the voice of thunder; terrible as the Almighty of God! The effect of some of them, in the temple service, must have been immense. Sung by numbers carefully 'instructed,'\* and accompanied by those who could play 'skilfully;'+ arranged in parts, for 'courses'‡ and individuals, who answered each other§ in alternate verse;—various voices, single or combined, 'being lifted up,' sometimes in specific and *personal* expression, as the high service deepened and advanced,—priests, levites, the monarch, the multitude,||—there would be every variety of 'pleasant' movement, and all the forms and forces of sound,—personal recitative; individual song; dual and semi-choral antiphonal response; burst and swell of voice and instruments; attenuated cadences; apostrophe and repeat; united, full, harmonious combinations! With such a service, and such psalms, it was natural that the Hebrews should love with enthusiasm, and learn with delight, their national anthems, songs, and melodies; nor is it surprising that they were known among the heathen as a people possessed of these treasures of verse, and devoted to their recitation by tongue and harp. Hence it was that their enemies required of them (whether in seriousness or derision it matters not,) '*the words of a song,*' and said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.' "¶ \*\*

\* 2 Chron. xxv. 7. † Ps. xxxiii. 3. ‡ Ezra iii. 11. § Isaiah vi. 3.

|| Ps. cxviii. throughout, and many others. ¶ Ps. cxxxvii. 3, (margin.)

\*\* Binney's Service of Song in the House of the Lord. pp. 27, 28.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE TRUE SCHOLAR.

IN a discourse on Female Education, delivered by Rev. Professor Tappan before the Pittsfield Young Ladies' Seminary, there is a presentation of the true spirit in which Education—particularly that noblest kind of it, self-education—should be pursued. It strikes us as full of important truth finely expressed, and we commend it especially to parents and the young:—

The right spirit of education shows itself in the high and noble resolution to become educated—a resolution built upon the conviction that education is the birthright of the mind; a resolution, therefore, to be awed by no opposition, nor quelled by any difficulties which less than superhuman strength can meet.

“What sustained my courage,” says Heyne, “was neither ambition nor presumption, nor even the hope of one day taking my place among the learned. The stimulus that incessantly spurred me on, was the feeling of the humiliation of my condition, the shame with which I shrunk from the thought of that degradation which the want of a good education would impose upon me; above all the determination of battling courageously with fortune. I was resolved to try whether, although she had thrown me among the dust, I should be able to rise by my own efforts.” His ardour only increased with his difficulties. For six weeks, he allowed himself only two nights' sleep in the week. Here was a mind, conscious that its capabilities were not given only to throw shame upon them by grovelling with the filth of the world: Heyne felt that to rise was the birthright of his mind, and could not be prevented. Though fame should never make mention of his name, and he might for ever remain in obscurity, yet he would satisfy the longings of his mind, and enjoy the consciousness that he was an educated man.

In the next place, it is a spirit which leads us to a comprehension of the attributes, capacities, and hopes of our intellectual, our spiritual being. We have already seen what inadequate results men are prone to forecast. He only can forecast the true result, the development of our whole being, who so far comprehends this being, as to look upon it with the awe and love which belong to its incalculable worth and dignity. The man who, *practically*, at least, regards himself as “dust and earth,” and becomes a mere pander to his own passions, or the submissive instrument and victim of the *thoughtless* world—a world of names, and modes, and pretensions, hollow and shadowy—can never educate himself, for he can never know or value his real being, nor can he submit to the self-denial, and the patient toil involved in the discipline.

The next element we mention, and a cardinal element of this self-education, is the love of perfection. This is a generic designation, and includes the love of all that is beautiful, great, and good; it of course includes the great ends of our being, our duties and responsibilities. Meditations upon what the mind is, and upon what it may become in relation to the present, and still more in relation to the future, awaken this love. It is a feeling which, once awakened, can never die. It grows stronger with the growth of the mind, with increase of knowledge,



# THE SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

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## LECTURES ON THE PUBLIC PSALMODY OF THE CHURCH.

### LECTURE II.—PSALMODY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

IN the Jewish Church, sacred song was, as we have seen, closely associated with the gift of inspiration. It formed, in fact, one of the various departments of the prophetic office among the Jews; it was cultivated, in connection with the service of God, chiefly by those who, either as inspired men or as priests, had special intercourse with the Almighty; and as respects both its materials and the music by which it was accompanied, there is every reason to believe that in all cases it derived its origin from above. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that with the cessation of the prophetic office in Judea, and the interruption of direct intercourse between God and man, came the gradual decay of the musical department of the Jewish worship. It is true that they still continued to be a musical people; it is true that they still preserved a veneration for the great masters of song, whose poetry or whose music had enriched their national treasures, placing "such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing," in their catalogues of famous men, as worthy of a place among their great rulers, warriors, sages, and teachers;\* it is true, they still dwelt lovingly on the recollection of David, "with his whole heart, singing songs to Him that made him," and setting "singers before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and that daily the temple might sound from morning," and would boast of Solomon that "his name went far into the islands, and the countries marvelled at him for his songs;"† it is true that, upon occasions of peculiar interest, they testified their joy and their gratitude by solemn musical ceremonies, celebrating the downfall of a cruel oppressor, by singing unto the Lord with cymbals;‡ or the purifying of their temple from the pollution of heathen intruders, by the utterance of praises, with great variety of sound, making sweet melody;§ or the return of some valiant deliverer from the field of conquest, with thanksgiving and branches of palm trees, and with viols, and hymns,

\* Eccus. xlv. 3, 5. † Eccus. xlvii. 8, 9, 16, 17. ‡ Judith xv. 13; xvi. 1, 2, 7.

§ Eccus. i. 18; 1 Mac. iv. 54, 56.

and songs;\* it is true that the lovers of festivity still had music in their feasts, and that it was held the part of a wise man not to "hinder music," nor to "pour out words where there is a musician, or show forth wisdom out of time"†:—but notwithstanding all this, the glory of their nation had passed away, as well for music as for the higher endowments by which they had been so singularly distinguished. When the harp of prophecy was silent, the lyre of the Psalmist uttered but tremblingly its notes. In that long and deep night which had fallen over the favoured land, the voice of song was heard but in transient gushes, like the fitful wailing of an *Æolian* harp. All original genius seemed to have fled from the nation. The relics of their poetry, during this dark interval, which have come down to us, bear all the marks of impotent imitation. The melody that still dwelt among them was but the lingering echo of those grand strains which, once uttered, could not altogether die.

At length, this long and weary night passed away, and the dawn appeared. The set season to favour Zion arrived. The fulness of time was announced. God again visited his people. His voice was once more heard in Israel. His coming was as the morning, and his voice as the morning song.

With this "time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," the revival of sacred melody in the church was coetaneous. Once more strains of heaven-inspired poetry were heard on earth. The virgin mother sung her "Magnificat"—the grandest burst of poetry that ever fell from woman's lips—fitly spoken by her whom all generations shall call Blessed. An aged priest, restored to second youth by the unexpected birth of a son—the long-desired prophet of the Lord—chanted his "Benedictus"—which seems like the sparkling flow of a stream that has long been bound by winter frosts, but leaps into sudden life and joyousness under the favouring breath of spring. And then, as if the melody of earth was all too poor for such an occasion, when that favoured mother gave birth to her mysterious child, the hosts of heaven gathered over the consecrated spot, and when the herald angel announced the advent of the church's Saviour and the world's Lord, a sudden burst of music filled the air, and the choirs of heaven sung their "*Gloria in excelsis*" on the verge of earth, and mortal ears were permitted for once to hear such strains as seraphs utter before the throne. The spirit of sacred song was again evoked. An inspiration higher than that of genius had once more descended upon men. The fire which had almost been extinguished upon the altar once more flashed forth, and filled the temple with its brightness. And when old Simeon took the divine babe into his arms, and sung over him his "*Nunc Dimittis*," and when aged Anna, coming in at that instant, was seized with the spirit of prophecy, and prolonged by her thanksgiving his song of faith and joy,—it must have been evident to "all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem," that "the day-spring from on high" had indeed visited them, and the acceptable year of the Lord had come.

He whose birth was thus signalised and celebrated by song had come to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. We are not, therefore, warranted to expect, in the narrative of his life on earth, any fre-

\* 1 Mac. xiii. 51; 2 Mac. x. 1, 7.

† Ecclus. xxxii. 3, 4.



quent indications of his enjoying that mirth which excites to music, or even that solace which may be sought in song. Burdened with the sins of man, he was consumed by a deep and wasting sorrow; and though he was no enemy to happiness in others—though he could minister to the festivity of a marriage feast, or stand in the market-place and mark with an interested eye how little children imitated the customs, and exemplified the caprices of their seniors, and chode with each other, saying, “we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented;”<sup>\*</sup> or teach in his parables that there are times in a man’s life when it is lawful and good to be merry; and though we never read of his frowning upon any occasion of innocent festivity, or casting a gloom, by unseasonable discourse, upon any scene of gladness through which he passed; yet, for himself, there were but few gleams of sunshine thrown across the path of his life, and a sigh, rather than a song, was the natural utterance of the emotions which occupied his bosom. And yet that strain of exulting praise which ushered in his advent was not suffered utterly to expire amid the gloom of his humiliation. Once again, at least, it broke forth in a full swell of triumph, when, before his decease, he entered in royal state into Jerusalem. On that occasion we read, that “the multitude took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried Hosannah! blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.” At length the procession reached the summit of Mount Olivet, and the holy city in all its glory lay before their view. As he began to descend, the shout of exultation swelled louder, and now the voice of song was heard:—the multitude began to rejoice, and to praise God with a loud voice, saying—“Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.”<sup>†</sup> Through the streets of Jerusalem, and on to the temple they advanced, adding to their numbers at every step. In vain the polluters of the sacred edifice withstood his entrance; with resistless authority he cast them out, and indignantly denounced their iniquitous intrusion. In vain the enraged chief priests and scribes sought to arrest the triumph of him they had resolved to crush; the acclamations and the songs rose but the louder, from their attempt to rebuke them into silence. The very children set them at defiance, for they stood in the temple and cried, “Hosannah to the son of David.” It was a sudden and a strange outburst of irrepressible gladness; for which we can account satisfactorily only on the supposition that it was called forth by special divine influence, as a symbol of the spiritual triumph of Christ in his spiritual kingdom. God by this means fulfilled his own prophecy and promise. The daughter of Zion was summoned to welcome her King, and out of the mouths of babes and of sucklings God perfected praise.

That our Lord, during his life on earth, frequently joined in the songs of praise which were offered to God in the stated public worship of the temple, as well as in the more private exercises of social devotion, which were practised by pious Jews, we have no reason to doubt. The only instance, however, which the evangelists have recorded of this kind is in the narrative of the last evening he spent with his disciples before

<sup>\*</sup> Luke vii. 32.<sup>†</sup> Luke xix. 37, 38.

his crucifixion. His public ministry was now finished, and the hour of his deepest agony and shame was drawing nigh. The first day of the feast of unleavened bread was hastening to its close, and soon the appointed time would come, when he, the Paschal lamb, was to be offered. The shepherd was about to be smitten, and the sheep to be scattered; yet ere that event arrived, he had gathered them around him, and, retired from all intrusion, he was feeding them with the choicest of his stores. Long, and full, and elevating was the discourse which on that occasion Jesus addressed to his disciples. On no other occasion, so far as we know, did he so copiously unfold to them his mind and heart. He felt that their intercourse on earth was soon to terminate, and he sought to make the most of the precious opportunity. He foresaw the dismay and grief with which his approaching trial and death would strike them, and he kindly sought to prepare them for the stroke, by filling their minds with those elevating thoughts which alone could sustain them under so severe a sorrow. At length the moment of parting came. The betrayer had already left the company, and his infamous bargain with his Master's enemies was made. The sacred rite by which the memorable scenes of that night and the following day are to be kept in perpetual remembrance had been instituted. The prince of darkness was already in the arena, and the champion of our salvation had to descend to encounter the foe. What remained to be done? But *one* thing. Ere that sweet fellowship was to be severed, ere that dreadful trial was to be endured, ere that fierce conflict was to be fought, the voice of song must rise, that their last united act might be one of thanksgiving, and that music might lend its aid in preparing for the approaching crisis. And so, "*when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*" A much-to-be-remembered song! Amidst the plaintive notes of that hymn, chanted in an humble chamber, perhaps in some obscure street of the city of Jerusalem, the knell of the former dispensation was struck, and the trumpet sounded for a new and better economy to begin.

Of this economy, the leading characteristics are, *simplicity* and *spirituality*. Whatever, therefore, was merely ceremonial, typical, or carnal, in the ancient dispensation, has been abolished, and nothing outward remains but what is inseparable from the worship of creatures surrounded with a corporeal frame, or what is helpful of the devotion and piety of such. Among other things retained under the New Testament economy is the use of song and music in the service of God. Brief and imperfect as are the notices in the writings of the apostles concerning the order of public worship in the primitive churches, there is no doubt or uncertainty as to the fact, that *singing* formed an important part of it. The command of the apostle to the Ephesians, that they should "speak to themselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord,"\* and that of the same apostle to the Colossians, that they should "teach and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord,"† are sufficient to show what was the practice and the rule of the apostolic churches in this matter. In pri-

\* Eph. v. 18, 19.

† Col. iii. 16.

vate life also, the early Christians resorted to sacred music both as a relief in sorrow, and as an utterance of mirth. "Is any merry?" says the apostle, "let him sing psalms."\* And when Paul and Silas were imprisoned, and their feet made fast in the stocks, they cheered the gloomy hours of midnight by their eucharistic song: "At midnight they sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them." Ay, and they were heard elsewhere than within the prison walls. God heard them, and gave quick and startling response. "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."† How striking to find again, and that under the Christian dispensation, the divine Majesty sensibly manifested in answer to the invocation of song!

For the *materials* of their sacred songs, the primitive Christians would, doubtless, be indebted, in the first instance, to the psalms and hymns of the Old Testament. Of these by far the greater part utter truths and express feelings common to the Church of God in all ages, and may therefore be used, with equal propriety, in the Christian church as in the Jewish. It is evident, however, that the early believers were not confined to these. In the passage already quoted, Paul speaks not only of *psalms* and *hymns*, but also of *spiritual songs* or *odes*. That these terms designate different species of sacred compositions, there seems no reason to doubt; but what were the characteristic peculiarities of each of the species thus designated, it is not so easy to determine. Some think that by "psalms" the apostle intended to describe such as were invariably accompanied by the psaltery or harp, by hymns, such as were sung without such accompaniment, and by spiritual odes, such as were rather recited than sung. Others regard the term "psalms," as simply describing the collection under that name in the Old Testament, the term "hymns," as designating compositions specially devoted to the celebration of the praises of God, and the phrase, "spiritual odes," as referring to any composition of a poetical character calculated to edify or comfort the church, whether said or sung. To this latter opinion I incline, but with some modifications. I regard the "psalms" of which the apostle speaks, as being the collection under that name in the Old Testament, and which was commonly cited under this title, by our Lord and the apostles; but I by no means admit that this interpretation excludes that which infers from this expression, that instrumental music was used in the primitive churches, for if there be one point more certain than another in reference to the ancient psalmody, it is that the use of instrumental music entered essentially into the very idea of a psalm; without this there might be a sacred song, but that song was not a psalm.‡ By "hymns" we shall best understand sacred poems, made to

\* James v. 18.

† Acts xvi. 25, 26.

‡ On this point we appeal to the testimony of the Greek fathers, who, it may be presumed, are the best authorities for the meaning attached by the Greek Christians, to the terms used by them in their religious services. "A psalm," says Gregory of Nyssa, "is a melody by means of a musical instrument." *Tract II. in Psalmos, cap. 3.* "The psalm," says Basil, "is a musical composition, where, in good rhythm, and according to harmonical principles, there is a striking upon the instrument." *In Psal. 29.*

be sung, and devoted exclusively to the direct praise of God.\* And by "spiritual odes," we are to understand, I apprehend, compositions of a poetical character, which were chanted in a sort of recitative, by a single individual, who was specially inspired by the Spirit for that purpose. That ability to compose odes for the edification of the church, was one of the supernatural endowments conferred upon individuals in the apostolic churches, is indubitable. The endowment was claimed by Paul himself, when he says, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also;"† where the context clearly shows that the apostle's meaning is, that a true and just use of this divine endowment of singing for the edification of the church, was so to sing, as that the church might understand and profit thereby. The "singing with the spirit," is placed by the apostle on the same footing with the speaking with tongues, and the other miraculous gifts of the early church, and as all these were given, not for personal display, but for the good of the church, he instances, in his own case, the proper use of them; and rebukes, in the Corinthians, the sinful employment of them for purposes of vain glory. Nor does the divine aid seem to have been limited to any one of the three species above considered, though, probably, more especially manifested in the case of the last; for Paul, in describing the abuse of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church, says, amongst other evils, that when they came together, every one had a *psalm*, had a doctrine, had a tongue, &c.,‡ which shows that psalms were composed and performed in the early churches, by Divine assistance; that which Paul reprehends here, being not the bringing of the psalm, but the bringing of it for mere individual display, without any regard to the benefit of the church. In the passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians, already considered, it has been supposed, from the language of Paul, that what he had in his eye, were compositions dictated by the Divine Spirit, for his injunction runs thus:—"Be filled with the Spirit: speaking to yourselves in psalms," &c; but such an interpretation, we fear, can hardly be defended from the charge of overstraining the apostles words, especially as the whole context seems to show that it is rather of those influences of the Spirit which are opposed to the sensual lusts of men, and which lead to praise God and be of gentle spirit towards our brethren, than of those which conferred miraculous powers, that the apostle here speaks. Even without this passage, however, the evidence seems conclusive, that for much, at least, of the materials of their worship, the early churches were indebted to the direct inspiration of God.

Have any of these inspired songs come down to us? The question is an interesting one, but it can receive only a conjectural answer. Paul, we have seen, had the gift of inspired singing in the church, and it has been supposed that as several parts of his epistles are in a rythmical form, we have, in these, specimens, so to speak, of what he used to sing

\* By the Greeks the word, *ὕμνος*, was used strictly of a song of praise addressed to the Deity. Phavorinus explains it as "an ode to God." Ammonius, in his Treatise of the Differences of Words, says, "A hymn differs from an encomium; for the hymn is appropriated to the gods, the encomium belongs to men." Other instances are given by Schleusner in his Lexicon.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

in the church. Such, for instance, is the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, the closing verses (51—58) of 1 Cor. xv.; Col. i. 15—17, and especially 1 Tim. iii. 15, 16, and 2 Tim. ii. 11—13. All these possess a rythmical character, and when we compare them in the original with the hymns used by the early Christians of a later age, still extant, we can easily see that if they sung the one, they could also sing the other. Even in our English version most of the passages above referred to might be chanted as readily as the *Magnificat* or the *Nunc Dimittis*. But it is to the book of Revelation we must turn if we would find what may, with the greatest amount of probability, be regarded as remains of the inspired songs of the primitive church. That book was written for the comfort of the harassed and afflicted Christians of the latter part of the first century, and though its costume is Jewish, and its language symbolical, the very purpose for which it was written would seem to show that its lessons and its facts had an actual basis in the condition of the churches at the time. It is not improbable, therefore, that the chants which it contains were actually borrowed from the christian assemblies of the time, the more especially as we find some of them—the *Hallelujah*, for instance, (Rev. xix. 2,)—in use from a very early period in the post-apostolic churches. All this, I repeat, is purely conjectural as respects the origin of these portions of the inspired volume, but it is conjecture which in the absence of any evidence to the contrary there seems nothing in the nature of the case to forbid our embracing.

Of the hymns which have come down to us through other channels than the inspired volume, there are two which, with some degree of probability, are supposed to belong to the apostolic age. The one of these is the *Doxology*, commonly known as the *Gloria Patri*, and the other is the *Morning Hymn*, both of which are still used in the liturgy of the Church of England. The latter has been preserved in its original Greek; and in the very ancient MS. of the Septuagint, called the *Alexandrian*, it is appended to the book of Psalms along with a number of hymns from various parts of Scripture, which seem to have been used in the devotions of the early believers. Another which is called the *Evening Hymn* has also been preserved; and is acknowledged to be very ancient. In all of these an elevated strain of devotion is preserved, and the doctrine of the Trinity is prominently recognised.\*

Of the *music* used in the primitive churches, little can be said with certainty. That it was of a simple, inartificial, and unrestrained character, may be inferred from the fact, that what are now considered the essentials of musical composition, viz.: counterpoint, notation, and admeasurement of time were the discoveries of a later age. It is probable that, for the most part, it consisted of little more than a measured recitative, and that at the highest it never went beyond a plain chant; its chief art consisting in a skilful application of accent and tone to the words. Perhaps a few marks were used to regulate the length of the notes, or to guide the singers in their intonations, otherwise it is difficult to see how several persons could sing in unison. Of harmony, in the modern sense of the term, they seem to have known nothing; and, perhaps, the greatest effects were produced by simply

\* For a translation of this Evening Hymn, see Scottish Cong. Mag. for September, 1837, p. 276.

dwelling upon some favourite idea, and uttering it in a tone, and with an emphasis which bespoke the deep feeling it awakened simultaneously in their bosoms. Whatever disadvantages of a musical kind belonged to this species of singing, it possessed this all-important excellence, that it made the *sense* the first thing in the hymn, and subordinated the sound to the due and forcible expression of the sense. It had thus a strength and vitality which our modern church music wants; the tunes of which have, for the most part, been made for themselves and not for any particular words, and are, consequently, to be sung to hymn after hymn, and verse after verse, however different in subject, if they be but all of the same metre.

In both the Jewish and the early christian worship, *responsive* or *antiphonal* singing was frequently practised. This consisted in one part of the congregation singing one part of the piece, and a response or chorus, or corresponding part being sung by another. It is to this antiphonic singing that Paul refers, when he enjoins upon the Ephesians the speaking to themselves, *i.e.* to one another, alternately, in psalms and hymns and spiritual odes, and upon the Colossians, the teaching and admonishing of one another by the same means. It is to this kind of singing, also, that Pliny alludes in his famous letter to Trajan, when he says that the Christians were accustomed "to sing a song to Christ as God by turns." When the language and ideas of the hymn were suitable, it is easy to see how much this kind of singing must have added to the effect. On this point, however, we shall have more to say in next Lecture.

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## SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE LATE FRANCIS DICK.

### PART IV.—RESIDENCE AT HAMBURGH.

#### (*Journal continued.*)

*Jan. 1st.* HAD public worship to-day, when about fifty attended, and appeared to join with much seriousness in the exercises. I gave them a few words from 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Have much cause to bless the Lord for his continued goodness, in being permitted to enter upon another year in such circumstances of peace, comfort, and health.

*7th.* To-day preached as usual. Had good meetings both parts of the day, though the weather was unfavourable, it having rained and snowed to-day.

*18th.* Went to Altona and Flotbeck. Had some agreeable conversation with Mr. V. senior.

*20th.* On my way home from Flotbeck called on a German, who appeared dying, and by means of an interpreter had some talk with him. He said he was willing to die,—thought he was ready,—hoped that God would reward him after death for the good he had done,—owned at last that he was a sinner, but had not done any thing very bad,—expected God would forgive him because he prayed to him,—he had read the Bible, could repeat a good deal of it,—knew little about the Saviour, and did not speak of him till asked what he thought about him. Heard with fixed attention the 5th of the Romans read, and a few things said from it,—said that one of his pastors had been there the day before, but he told him nothing about these things, only said to him that he had nothing to do but pray for death, as he might be sure of going to heaven so soon as he died, having suffered so much in this world he was perfectly safe. The poor man added, I do not wish to see him again. When I talked to him about the love of God and the death of Christ, he shed tears, and said he would wish to see me again.



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## LECTURES ON THE PUBLIC PSALMODY OF THE CHURCH.

### LECTURE III.—PSALMODY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH SINCE THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

HAVING brought our notices of the Psalmody of the Church down to the close of the apostolic age, we have now to trace its progress in subsequent times. Here, however, the field opened before us is so vast and so crowded with materials, that it is impossible in such a course as the present, to make any attempt fully to survey it. I shall, therefore, content myself with briefly adverting to the more prominent and interesting facts connected with sacred music in the church, from the commencement of the second century to the time of the Reformation, and shall then dwell for a little upon the history of the art in our own country.

There is no doubt that in the early or Ante-Nicene church, the use of psalmody was carefully attended to, and formed a principal part of the public services of the Christians. For this we have not only the testimony of christian writers, but so well known does the usage seem to have been, that Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, formerly referred to, adduces sacred singing as one of the characteristic customs of the Christians. "They are accustomed," says he, "on a stated day, to meet before the dawn, and to sing to Christ as God a responsive song." From this it might be conjectured, that on the Lord's day they usually commenced their public services by singing; and this the testimony of the christian writers establishes. Jerome, describing the usages of a portion of the Egyptian Christians, says, "they meet at nine o'clock, and then the psalms are sung and the Scriptures are read," &c. So also Cassian says, "first the psalms were sung, and then followed two readings, one out of the Old Testament and the other out of the New." From this practice there seem to have been occasional departures, some churches commencing public service by the reading of the Scriptures, and some by a short prayer; but in most cases the services seem to have begun with psalmody.\*

The compositions used by the Christians in those acts of devotion, were for the most part such as have been already mentioned—the psalms and hymns of Scripture. After the apostolic age, the gift of

\* *Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church.* B. 14, c. 8, § 5.

singing an inspired song in the church, ceased with the rest of the spiritual gifts of a miraculous kind, which distinguished the primitive church; and it was not for some considerable time that mere human compositions of a poetical kind seem to have been employed, unless we consider the three hymns mentioned in last lecture, as coming under this head. They were thus thrown upon the stores of sacred poetry which the Scriptures supply, and especially upon the exhaustless treasury of the book of Psalms. These they appear to have sung in course right through, excepting that for special occasions there seem to have been special psalms appointed. Thus ps. lxiii. beginning, "O God, my God, early will I seek thee," was styled the "morning psalm," and was regularly used in the morning service; ps. cxli., which begins, "Lord, I cry unto thee, make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice when I call unto thee; let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice," was in like manner styled "the evening psalm," and was always used in the evening service; certain other psalms were appropriated to the communion service and to funerals, and in some cases particular psalms were sung on days set apart to commemorate the events of our Saviour's personal history on earth, such as the 22d ps., which even the Donatists as well as their less scrupulous opponents the Catholics, used on the day devoted to the remembrance of our Saviour's passion. [Bingham, bk. xiv., ch. 1, § 5.] Other portions of Scripture also were appointed to be sung on special occasions: thus the Trisagion, or the song of the seraphim, from Isa. vi. 3, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory," with the addition of the words, "blessed be he for ever, Amen," was appropriated to the *Missa Fidelium*, or meeting of the believers for the observance of the Lord's supper, as were also the song of the Virgin, (Luke i. 45,) and the Apocryphal song of the three youths in the furnace at Babylon.\* At the end of each psalm, the Gloria Patri was usually sung, though in some churches this was done only at the close of each section of the psalms. The morning and evening hymn, mentioned in the preceding lecture, were also regularly used.

At what time hymns of purely and avowedly human composition came into use we cannot now exactly ascertain. A passage in Eusebius, the church historian, asserts, that "from the beginning, psalms and odes, written by believing brethren, praise Christ, the word of God ascribing to him Deity,"† and in the middle of the third century, Paul of Samosata, an opponent of our Lord's deity, found it necessary, in furtherance of his heretical notions, to forbid among his followers the use of any hymns of human composition, and to restrict their psalmody to the psalms of the Old Testament; his object in this being, doubtless, to get rid of the influence which the early hymns in honour of Christ would have in imbuing the minds of the people with reverence for his divine majesty. ‡

\* Part of this Song is still retained in the service of the Episcopal church as it always has been in the Romish Breviary. It stands in the morning service as a substitute, if required, for the *Te Deum*.

† Hist. Eccl. Lib. v., c. 28, *sub init.*

‡ This, indeed, is expressly imputed to him by an ancient document. "He abolished the use of psalms to our Lord Jesus Christ, on the plea that they were recent and the composition of recent men." *Epist. Synod. ad Dionys.* ap. Mansi I. 1093. See also Neander's *Church Hist.*, vol. II. p. 366. Torrey's Transl., Ed. 1847.



In the extant writings of Clement of Alexandria, who died in the early part of the third century, we have a hymn to Christ which is ascribed to Clement as its author, but which, unhappily, is of so turgid and mystical a character, that one would fain believe it not genuine. Some have claimed for Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, in the beginning of the second century, the honour of being the earliest uninspired hymnologist of the Christian Church,\* but this is unsubstantiated by the evidence adduced, which only ascribes to Ignatius the introduction into the church of the antiphonal mode of singing, and that, we think, erroneously.† The earliest writers of hymns, regarding whom our information may be relied on, were connected with the Syrian Gnostics, but of their compositions nothing remains. In the writings of Ephræm the Syrian, a distinguished member of the church at Edessa, a number of hymns are extant in the Syrian language; most of which, however, are rather discourses in verse, intended to expose the errors of the Gnostics and propagate the orthodox truths, than hymns properly so called; and their chief excellence lies in the ardent announcement of the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity which they contain. At a later period, the number of hymns, both in the Greek and Latin languages, became considerable. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Hilary of Poitiers, Prudentius, Paulinus, and some others of less name in the Western Church, and John of Damascus, Theophanes and Cosmos of Jerusalem, &c., in the Eastern, contributed to increase the metrical treasures of the church. Of the compositions of these individuals not a few are still extant; those of them composed in Latin having been for the most part retained in the Romish Breviary. As might be expected, the character of these ancient hymns is very varied; some being rich in christian sentiment and feeling, and others being deeply tinged by superstitious error and folly. Of the better sort of those ancient hymns, a specimen may be here offered in translation.

EVENING HYMN, BY ST. AMBROSE.

Bright and blessed Three in One,  
 Unity supreme, alone,  
 Whilst from us the day-light parts,  
 Pour thy light into our hearts.  
 Thee when breaks the morning ray—  
 Thee when evening shuts the day—  
 Thee we call on suppliant knee,  
 Offering endless thanks to Thee.

HYMN BY PAULINUS.

Like blest Jacob may I live,  
 From the world a fugitive:  
 Find a rock beside my head,  
 Where to rest my weary head.  
 Grant me to repose on thee,  
 Christ, to all eternity.

\* Bingham, B. xiii., c. 5., § 5.

† Bingham cites Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi., c. 8, as his authority; but in that place not a word is said of Ignatius as the composer of "hymns to set forth the divinity of Christ," as Bingham asserts; Socrates simply records a legend of Ignatius having enjoyed "a vision of angels hymning the sacred Trinity by means of antiphonal hymns," from whom he learned the antiphonal mode of singing. There can be little doubt but that the antiphonal mode of singing was as ancient as the Jewish service.

May I live like Joseph pure ;  
 Let no snares my heart allure :  
 But inviolate as he,  
 Let me from temptation flee ;  
 Linger not to count the cost,  
 Though my all on earth he lost.

Time is fleeting fast away,  
 Let me use it whilst I may,  
 Time will soon for me be o'er,—  
 Lo! the Judge is at the door,—  
 Let me work and watch and pray,  
 Prompt his summons to obey.\*

In singing their hymns, the ancient Christians followed different usages. Sometimes the psalm or hymn was sung by one person only, the others "sitting in silence giving attention to him that sang."† Sometimes the whole assembly sang together, "the Spirit," as Chrysostom says "tempering the voice of each so as to produce one melody in all."‡ Sometimes the congregation was divided into two parts, and they sang the verses of the psalm alternately—"the notes of men, women, virgins, children in these responsary psalms," as Ambrose tells us, "sounding together like the noise of waves;"§ and sometimes the leader sang one part alone, and the congregation joined in with him in another, which was called the *epode* or *diapsalm*, or, as we should say, the chorus. During the singing the parties engaged in it always *stood*, this posture alone being deemed suitable for such an exercise.

The *music* used on these occasions seems to have continued for many generations of the same simple and inartificial character as that which prevailed in the apostolic age. When the people joined in the song it appears to have been little more than a chant of the very simplest order, consisting only of certain inflections of the voice, and more resembling reading than singing.|| But on other occasions a more artificial tuning of the voice was allowed, that, as Augustin says, the "feeble mind might, through the delight of the ears, arise to pious emotion."¶ Great anxiety, however, was always shown to avoid whatever was incompatible with the *religious* character of the exercise; and Augustin severely censures the Donatists for the use, in their worship, of ranting and boisterous tunes like those used in the theatre. It may be difficult for us to conceive how the simple and inartificial mode of conducting psalmody, which prevailed in the early churches, could have been productive of much effect upon the hearers; but that it was so, we cannot doubt,

\* The first two verses of this translation are taken, with the alteration of one word, from Dr. Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs*, p. 272.

† Cassian Instit. h. ii. c. 10. ‡ *Hom. in Psal.* 145. § *Expos. Psal. i.*

|| "The Primitive Church," says Rabanus Maurus, "psalmed so as that by a slight flexure of the voice the psalmody was effected, and, indeed, rather pronounced than sang. For the sake of the carnal, however, in the church rather than the spiritual, the custom of singing was introduced, in order that as they were not affected by the words, they might be moved by the sweetness of the modulation." *De Instit. Clericorum*, i. 28. The authority of Rabanus for the former of these statements, is Ambrose in his Comment on the Psalms; the latter (according to Mahillon) he has from Isidore.

¶ *Confess. l. x. c. 33.*

from the testimonies which have come down to us. "I remember," says Augustin, referring to the season of his conversion, "the tears I poured forth at the singing of the church in the commencement of my recovered faith; and though I now am more moved by the things sung than by the singing, yet when they are sung with a clear voice and a suitable melody, I again acknowledge the great utility of this practice."\* An improvement was effected by Ambrose, of Milan, upon the singing of his church, by the introduction of the chant which bears his name, but of which we now know nothing but the name. A still greater and more permanent advance was made by Gregory, surnamed the Great, who devoted himself anxiously to the cultivation of the art of sacred music, and from whom the Gregorian chant derives its appellation. But it was not till the year 1022 that any decided reformation was effected upon the music of the ancient church. At this date an obscure monk of Aretinum, named Guido, laid the basis of the modern science of music by the invention of counterpoint, and by other important innovations upon the ancient chant. Further on in the eleventh century, a great advance was made by the genius and skill of Francis of Cologne, and an Englishman of the name of Walter Odington, a monk of Evesham in Worcestershire. By them the proper measurement of music, and the due notation of musical sounds were reduced to system, and brought into general use.

To what extent *instrumental music* was employed in the early churches, it is not easy to say. Circumstanced as the Christians were during the first three centuries, we may readily conclude that it was neither in their power, nor accordant with their inclination to indulge in any ostentatious or expensive modes of conducting their social worship; but that, notwithstanding this, they did at least occasionally call in the aid of instruments in celebrating the divine praises, seems to rest upon adequate evidence. Were there nothing else, the strictures of some of the fathers upon what they regarded as *abuses* of the practice, would be evidence sufficient of the fact of its use. But, besides this, we find Clement, of Alexandria, saying to his brethren, "if you are able to accompany your voices with the lyre or the cithara, you will incur no blame."† Jerome also complains that the musical instruments invented by David for the worship of God, should be perverted to the purposes of pleasure and luxury. It ought, however, in fairness to be mentioned, that there is some doubt whether in these and in similar passages the writers refer to public or to private exercises of devotion. I am inclined to think that in those I have cited the reference is to public psalmody; but as there is room for questioning this, I am far from asserting it as indubitable. It would appear, also, that at a much later period, at least, in the Latin church, instrumental music was unknown, for so late as the year 1250, Thomas Aquinas asserts that in the christian church no musical instruments were employed. It is possible that as the music had assumed a more artificial character, the ancient instruments were found to be very imperfect accompaniments, and had, consequently, fallen into disuse. In the end of the thirteenth century, an instrument was introduced into the church which speedily showed its perfect adaptation to sacred music,

\* *Confess.* l. x. c. 33.† *Paedag.* lib. i. c. 4.

and has since superseded all others. This was the organ, which was brought from the east, and first used in the church service in 1290.

From this period to that of the Reformation there is nothing in the history of music which, in such a sketch as this, requires to be dwelt upon. Numerous advances were made, and many admirable pieces of sacred melody were composed during the intervening centuries; but, at almost every stage, improvement was impeded by the bigotted attachment to antiquity and the dread of any innovation, which reigned over the church during the middle ages. At the time of the Reformation, church music partook of the impulse communicated by that event, or rather by the series of events of which that was the most conspicuous; and, at the same time, fell under some of the caprices which the liberated energies of that period of quickening too frequently displayed. One improvement, of a kind for which we must ever be grateful, was effected by the Reformers, and that was the restoration to the people of their part in the exercises of public devotion. For many ages they had been fixed in the place of mere listeners. The nature of the music performed, the use of a dead language in the chants sung, and the constituting of musical science and church singing a purely clerical privilege, had effectually prohibited the people from any other share in the music of the church. The Reformation in this, as in other things, restored to them their rights, and summoned them to the duty of praising the Lord with their voice no less than with their heart. From the first this appears to have been an object seriously desired by all who were solicitous for a reform in the church. Among the followers of Wicliffe a more simple and congregational style of singing was cultivated than that which prevailed in the churches at that time, and against which Wicliffe himself was wont to hurl his denunciation, as a "vain knocking," by which "three or four proud and lecherous lorels [*i.e.* worthless fellows] letten other christen men of their devotion and compunction, and stirren them to worldly vanity."\* Huss, also, and his followers in Bohemia, had adopted an entirely new style of singing, which was altogether of a congregational character, and out of which the melodies of the modern Moravians had their source. It is well known how ardent was the great German Reformer in his love of music, and his desire to propagate the knowledge of it among the people, and the use of it in the church. "If any man despise music," says Luther, "I will have nothing to do with him. Music is a gift and present from God, not from man. Hence it drives away the devil, and makes people happy. I assign to music the place next to theology, and the highest honour. See how David and all the saints have clothed their sacred thoughts in verse, rythm, and song."† The use of music in dispelling sorrow and earthliness was a favourite theme with Luther. "The devil," says he, in one of his writings, "is a melancholy spirit, and he makes people sad, and cannot bear joyfulness. Hence, it arises, that he flees as far as possible from music; tarry he cannot when a man sings, especially if he sing sacred songs."‡ "When you are sad," he wrote once to a friend, "and want to get the better of your sadness, say, 'Up! I must play on the organ a hymn to my Lord Christ,' (such as the *Te Deum*, the *Benedictus*, &c.,) 'for the

\* Of Prelates, c. xi. cited in Le Bas' Life of Wiclif.

† *Werke*, xxii. 2253.

‡ *Ibid.* xxii. 1190.

Scripture teacheth me that he delighteth in joyful songs and music.' And then cheerfully strike the keys and sing away till the thoughts pass off, as did David and Elisha. Should the devil return, and cause in you care and sorrowful thoughts again, ward him off vigorously, and say, 'Away, I must sing and play again to my Lord Christ.'"<sup>\*</sup> What Luther thus commended in words he confirmed in practice, for not only did he care for the proper conducting of music in the churches, but he himself composed both hymns and tunes for the use of his followers. These have been sacredly preserved, and some of them have found their way into use in all Protestant churches. His claims to the honour of composing the "Old Hundred" tune are, I believe, disputed, but none can question his absolute proprietorship in both the words and the tune of what is called "Luther's Hymn," as well as some others much esteemed for richness of melody and fulness of devotional expression. In a kindred spirit Calvin sought to foster the use of sacred music in that part of the Reformed church where his influence principally prevailed. Destitute, however, of Luther's musical taste and fervour, he discarded not a little of what the latter retained, and the absence of which has communicated a sort of hardness and monotony to the singing of the Calvinistic churches, from which it is to be desired they may speedily escape.

In England the psalms were, at an early period in the history of the Reformation, put into verse, and the singing of them in this form became a test of a man's affection for the reformed cause. "Some poets," says Burnet, "such as the times afforded, translated David's psalms into verse; and it was a sign by which men's affections to that work (the Reformation) were every where measured, whether they used to sing them or not."<sup>†</sup> This version of the psalms, however, was so unworthy of the subject, that it soon fell into disuse. In the reign of Edward VI., an attempt was made to improve the version of the psalms, by Thomas Sternhold, a gentleman of the court, who completed fifty-seven of the psalms, which were published in 1549. John Hopkins, a clergyman, completed fifty-eight more, and the rest of the psalms was versified by different hands. The whole appeared in 1562, and has continued to the present day to be appended to the book of Common Prayer, as the authorized version in use in the Church of England. A metrical translation of the psalms was executed also by Archbishop Parker, and published in 1567, along with eight tunes of the prelate's own composition. King James was the next who attempted to convey in English verse the sense of the original; and he was followed by Sir Philip Sidney, who, in conjunction with his sister the Countess of Pembroke, executed a version of the Psalms of great poetical merit. A variety of writers subsequently made similar attempts, of whom we need only mention Sandys, Rous, and Tate and Brady. The work of the two last-named, received the royal sanction to be used in churches, but it has not been able, nor does it as a whole deserve, to supersede that of Sternhold and Hopkins. The version of Rous, who was a gentleman of fortune in the west of England, is that which, with some alterations, is in use in the churches in Scotland, having been adopted by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster. In the dissenting churches of England, the

<sup>\*</sup> *Werke*, x. 1021.

<sup>†</sup> *Reformation*, Part II., Book II.

version now universally used is that of Dr. Watts. This was published in 1714, and has from that time continued to guide the devotions and give expression to the pious feelings of the Nonconformists of England. To Dr. Watts, also, the world is indebted for a number of invaluable hymns; indeed there can be little hesitation in regarding him as the first hymn-writer in our language.\* His elevated tone of feeling, his appropriate phraseology, the exceeding melody of his rhythm, and the generally simple and felicitous figures he employs, have conspired to secure for his sacred songs a high place in the poetry of his country, whilst their truly evangelical character has ever made them among the choicest treasures of the devout worshipper. With him stands associated a noble band who have delighted to consecrate the efforts of genius and piety to the service of the sanctuary in the same way. The sainted Doddridge, the seraphic Wesley, the pious Ken, the good John Newton, the gifted Cowper, and many besides, have laid the church under lasting obligation by their contributions to her hymnology. In looking over the long and honourable list of our hymn-writers, it is pleasing to see how individuals belonging to all christian denominations are found upon it. Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists, Baptists and Paedobaptists, meet here as on common ground, and assist each other as brethren. Pleasing indication of the essential oneness of the church of Christ, notwithstanding its external divisions! Auspicious omen of that glorious day, when the whole body of the redeemed shall be assembled together to sing with united voice "the song of Moses and of the Lamb!"

To such men the church of God is undoubtedly under deep obligations; as well as to those who, possessed of musical taste and talent, have composed fitting melodies in which these hymns and psalms may be sung. The two must go together in our esteem and gratitude. As the ancient Jews placed in the list of their famous men, "such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing," so must we. We are their debtors. Without them our piety would want fitting utterance, and our praise would expire in fruitless effort. They are to us a voice wherewith we may magnify the Lord. In the benefits they confer on us, they stand (however vast the interval between) *next* to the sacred writers. The highest honour in Christ's church is that of a Paul or a John who to all succeeding times conveys that truth by which sinners are to be saved; but next to them I would place a Watts or a Wesley, a Luther or a Purcell, through whose aid redeemed spirits find utterance for their deepest and holiest emotions, and praise God in strains that make earth resemble heaven, that cheer amid the sorrows of time, and that rise clear and calm above the very agony of death.

\* This is the judgment of a very competent judge, Mr. Montgomery, who "hesitates not" to give to Dr. Watts the praise of being "the greatest name among hymn-writers." *Introductory Essay to Christian Psalmist.*



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## LECTURES ON SACRED PSALMODY.

### LECTURE IV.—NATURE, DESIGN, AND IMPORTANCE OF THE EXERCISE.

HAVING in last Lecture finished what appertains to the history of sacred music in the church, so far as our design rendered it necessary to enter into that subject, I now proceed to the consideration of what may be called the *practical* aspect of the inquiry. Here there are four topics to which I would successively call attention, viz., the Nature of Church Psalmody—its Design—the Duty of cultivating it—and the Means by which this may be most advantageously attended to.

I. Psalmody is the utterance of devotional or pious feeling, in words adapted to musical notes.

It is the utterance of *feeling* ; it is not the repetition of a creed ; not the profession of opinion ; not the offering of counsel or admonition ; not the describing of scenery or events ;—it is the utterance of feeling—the expression of emotion—the giving vent to the affections and the desires of the heart.

It is the utterance of *pious* and *devotional* feeling—feeling which has God for its object, which is called forth by the view of his character, perfections, and works, or which is stimulated by the circumstances in which, as his people, we are placed in the present world. Feelings which lie beyond the range of this circle, however powerful and however interesting in themselves, have no place in the psalmody of the church. The church is the house of God ; what is conducted there is the service of God ; and the only praises that ought to be celebrated there are his, the only emotions that ought to find utterance there are such as he inspires, or his word and works excite. Hence all merely poetical, imaginative, ethical, or domestic emotion, is out of place in Church Psalmody. The feelings which alone ought to find an expression there are those which piety will sanction, and devotion claim as kindred to itself,—the piety and the devotion being themselves both such as owe their origin to and derive their character from the word of God.

Psalmody is pious and devotional feeling *uttered in words*. There is such a thing as singing and making melody in the heart ; but this, though essential to all true spiritual psalmody, is not itself psalmody.

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There is also such a thing as praising God by our works, so as that all we do shall be like a sweet melody rising up to glorify his name; but this, though the end to which all our psalmody should tend to bring us, is not itself psalmody. To this the utterance of articulate words, embodying and expressing our feelings, is essential. Psalmody is pious and devotional feeling clothing itself in symbols—becoming perceptible through sensible forms—ascending to heaven by the vehicle of “winged words.”

In fine, Psalmody is the utterance of pious and devotional feeling in *musical notes*. It is possible for us to say the praises of God, or to give utterance to the emotions of a pious heart in language of the simplest kind; but this is not psalmody. Without singing there is no psalmody. In whatever way the singing is performed, whether by simple recitative, or by chanting, or by the use of regular tunes; whether by one person or by many, and whether by simple melody or with the addition of harmony—singing there must be, else there is not that which constitutes one of the peculiar features of psalmody or church music.

II. On the *design* of this exercise it is not necessary that we should dwell at any length. Every one will at once perceive that it is a natural, an agreeable, and a refreshing mode of giving expression to our religious emotions. God has made us to receive pleasure from the musical combinations of sounds; he has made us to seek this mode of giving vent to the emotions which have been vividly excited in us by whatever cause; and he has made us to experience a sense of delight and exhilaration from such exercises, especially when they are performed in unison with others. Hence, as the offering of praise to him is a great religious duty, and as the heart that is filled with pious feeling finds that the utterance of that in appropriate words is a great spiritual necessity, God has wisely and graciously ordained that the duty and the gratification should be combined, and that our praises to him should be presented in a manner which shall make the exercise no less attractive and refreshing, than it is binding and becoming. Nor is this all; not only has God in this way united duty and pleasure, but he has secured thereby the *spiritual profit* of his worshippers. The natural effect of the utterance of any emotion in song, is the augmenting of that emotion in its intensity. It grows by getting vent in such a way. In music there is a reflex action of the sound upon the soul, which strengthens within the man the emotion that gave that sound birth. Hence, the use made of music in all cases where the causing or deepening of emotion is desired. The existence of the music pre-supposes the existence of the emotion it is designed to embody, and the performance of it in any given circumstances, pre-supposes that the parties placed in these circumstances are already, to a certain extent, imbued with the emotion, and prepared to give it utterance; but the great end to be attained by the performance is to act back upon this state of mind, and thereby rouse the emotion to a higher pitch. Thus the warlike notes that conduct the soldier into battle, at once embody the emotions of valour, or wrath, or pride, which are supposed to swell his bosom, and rouse these emotions into a still fuller and stronger tide. So also in the case of festive music; the emotions of joyous mirth, or wild revelry, which such music embodies, render it at one and the same time, a felt expression of the predominant feelings of the party, and a powerful means of evoking those feelings in



a still higher degree. Now it is on the same natural principle that sacred music is designed to act. It is proper and it is refreshing as an utterance of pious and devotional feeling; but it is also profitable to us as a means of deepening the current and increasing the amount of such feeling in our bosoms. In giving scope, for instance, to our grateful emotions towards God by song, we thereby bring ourselves under an influence which prepares us for regarding with still deeper gratitude all the divine beneficence towards us; and so of every other feeling which may be appropriately embodied in sacred psalmody. To sing the praises of God is not only becoming—not only a duty we owe to him,—not only a most pleasant and refreshing mode of offering worship, but a most valuable medium of spiritual improvement and growth in grace. Alas! that by so many this great design of sacred music should be overlooked or unknown, and that our singing in church should be so extensively regarded either in the light of a mere ceremony, a mere duty, or a mere relaxation,—a thing to be done because it is highly proper, very agreeable as a change from the graver services of the occasion, or exceedingly convenient as a mode of occupying time till the congregation collects, or so as to fill up the allotted space without wearying the person conducting the services. Where such ideas prevail it is no wonder that christian psalmody should be at a low ebb; and is it not a melancholy fact, that these ideas do prevail almost universally in this country? Is it not true, that in few christian congregations is it fully understood that when they join to sing they are uniting in what is meant to be, and ought to be, a great spiritual discipline—an effort after advancing godliness—a medium of preparation for the songs and services of heaven?

III. These remarks conduct us naturally to the next head of our subject, viz., *the importance of the due cultivation of sacred psalmody*. And here I would remark, 1. That we may estimate this importance from the frequency and urgency of the references to psalmody in the Word of God. Of the passages bearing upon this subject many have been already quoted in previous lectures. Instead, therefore, of repeating these at length, I would only briefly remind you, that in the Word of God the exercise of sacred music is commended to us as one especially becoming the righteous;\* enjoined upon us as a duty especially binding upon the servants of the Lord;† enforced by the recorded example of the most devout in former times, as well as by the example of our blessed Lord himself; and rendered pleasingly impressive to us by being set forth as the emblem of joy and gladness, both in the church below and in the church above. Of no other part of religious worship does the Bible say so much and speak so strongly as of this. Something is said in commendation of the reading of the Scriptures; it is possible to adduce scriptural authority for the preaching of sermons; there can be no doubt of the high estimate set in the Bible upon prayer, both private and social; but on no part of our worship is the Word of God so full and explicit as on that which consists in celebrating the praises of God in a song. Such is the importance attached to this exercise by the apostle Paul, that he places it on a par with the great moral duty of beneficence, as constituting along with it the proper sacrifice of the christian priesthood. “Let us offer,” says he, ‡ “the sacrifice of praise unto God con-

\* Ps. xxxiii. 1; Prov. xxix. 6, 7.

† Ps. cxiii. 1.

‡ Heb. xiii. 15, 16.

tinually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name;" but "to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." In this passage there can be little doubt that the apostle has in view something beyond the mere *singing* of praise to God, for this it is impossible to offer *continually*, as he here enjoins; his command goes to the prescribing of that noblest of all music, the harmony of our whole intellectual and active being with the mind and will of God—the song of Thought, and Work, and Will, no less than that of Word—the consecration of the entire powers and properties of our nature to the praise and glory of God. But at the same time there can be no doubt that the apostle had in his eye the *singing* of God's praise as an essential, if not the primary part of his injunction; else why refer so specifically to "the fruit of *the lips*," as that which he enjoins upon us especially to offer? Here, then, we have the highest authority for attaching superior importance to the exercise of sacred psalmody. When it is, as it ever ought to be, a *sincere* and *spiritual* exercise, it is the offering unto God of a sacrifice with which he is well pleased. It is a priestly act, in which all may, and all ought to join, whom Christ has washed from their sins in his blood, and made kings and priests unto God. For any such to refuse or neglect this, is as if a priest shrunk from serving the altar he had been ordained to serve, or left the sacrifice to waste which he had been appointed to present. Let all of us who profess to have been through grace incorporated into the spiritual priesthood, beware lest at any time this iniquity should be chargeable upon us.

2. It is especially the duty of a christian congregation to cultivate psalmody, inasmuch as, in most churches, this is the only part of the public worship of God in which the people take an active and obvious part. It is true that in no part of the service ought the people to be mere spectators; in prayer, they ought to pray; and while the preacher reads or expounds God's Word, they ought to be in the condition of intelligent recipients of that Word. Still in both these parts of the worship they are silent; the service is with them one of the heart and mind alone; there is nothing indicating to the senses that they are partakers in the exercise which is conducted by the person occupying the pulpit. It is otherwise in the psalmody. There the preacher simply prescribes the exercise, and announces the theme, and the people assume as *their* part the performance of the service. This is peculiarly and properly their part of the public worship. They then summon attention to themselves as the parties vocally and ostensibly engaged in the service of God. Is it not, then, of vast importance that they should do their own part well? Is it not disgraceful if, having but this one thing to do, they either cannot or will not do it respectably? Is it not absurd for a congregation to be careful that every part of the service should be well conducted except that which they have to conduct themselves? Surely a regard to consistency, a feeling of honourable pride, a sense of common decency, to say nothing of other and higher motives, ought to prevent such improprieties, and lead to such a cultivation of the art of sacred music, by *all* our people as should enable them, when they stand up to praise God with a song, to do what they thus openly pretend to do, in such a manner as, if it should not excite admiration, would at least prevent disgust and contempt.

3. The direct advantages of a taste for psalmody to the parties cultivating it, form another evidence of the importance of such cultivation. It has been already remarked, that this exercise, when properly conducted, tends to gratify the taste, to exhilarate the feelings, to refresh the heart, and to increase the devotional tendencies of those engaging in it. On these direct advantages of this exercise, therefore, I need not dwell further than to remind you, that in them you have a strong argument for not neglecting to seek for eminence in it. Whatever some ascetic moralists may say to the contrary, there is no doubt that mental recreation and refreshment are great blessings, and ought to be sought in due measure by all proper means; and if music conveyed no other benefits than these, we would still advocate its pursuit. Milton, in his treatise on education, presses upon those who have the care of youth, this advantage of music. "An interval of rest may," says he, "with both profit and delight, be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music, heard or learned, either while the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or, in unimaginable touches adorns and graces the well-studied chords of some choice composer. Sometimes the lute or soft organ-stops, waiting on elegant voices, either to religious, material, or civil ditties, which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners to smooth and make them gentle, from rustic harshness and distempered passions." Such are the benefits of music, and especially sacred music, as a mental tonic and discipline; and when to these we can add its effect on our spiritual well-being, a strong case surely is made out in its favour. But beside these, there is one other advantage which may be mentioned, flowing directly from music when wisely cultivated, but especially realised in the pursuit and practice of sacred music. I refer to its healthy effect upon the body, both by the physical exercise of singing, and by the exhilarating influence it has on the spirits. A medical poet tells us that music

"Expels diseases, softens every pain,  
Subdues the rage of poison and the plague;  
And hence the wise of ancient days ador'd  
One power of physics, melody, and song." \*

Without going so far as this, (the imagination of the poet having here carried him a little beyond the bounds of sober science and observation,) I am bold to affirm, that in the *due* and *wise* use of music there is a valuable aid to health, and it strongly impresses itself upon my mind, that in the use of music on the Lord's day, of a kind adapted to the religious character of that day, there is a wise and gracious provision for the refreshment of the worshippers, wearied as they for the most part are with the labours of the preceding week, and for enabling them to return with renewed alacrity to their daily toil. In this there seems nothing extravagant or improbable. Among other beneficent uses of the Sabbath, its effect in preserving the health, by recruiting the energies of the people, is one of the most obvious. Now, for this, mere cessation from toil is not enough. There needs also something to exhilarate and produce a wholesome reaction in the system; and what so well adapted for this as music? To this exercise, therefore, the Sabbath

\* Armstrong.

should be largely devoted, and with christian people, of course, the music selected will be such as not to counteract the other and more sacred purposes of the day. The songs of the Sabbath will be with them the songs of Zion, and such songs the Sabbath ought to have. In the dwellings of the righteous, the voice of joy and melody should be heard all through that joyful day. A still and songless Sabbath is an unhappy invention of Puritanism, unknown either to the ancient Jewish or to the early Christian church. The day when God rested from his work of creation,—the day on which Christ rose from the dead, has ever been in the church, until with some in these later times, a day of sacred mirth and sacred music. Let it be so still. Let us revive the ancient practice, and enjoy the former blessing; and at any rate, in the sanctuary let the toil-worn worshipper, whose ear all through the busy days of the preceding week has been stunned with the din of the work-shop or the market-place, and who has come to the house of God, hoping to be relieved and reinvigorated, not be deprived of the benefit which the sacred strains of music are calculated to produce upon his exhausted frame. Let him forget his toil amid the swelling jubilee of his assembled brethren. Let his sinking energies be again roused as he listens to and joins in the gladsome melodies of the day of rest. Let him be carried by the elevating bursts of song away from the recollection of earth's toils, and cares, and sorrows; and let him have such a real and ennobling foretaste of that place where the anthem never ceases, and the halleluiah is ever renewed, that, forgetting all besides, he shall be ready to exclaim,

"My willing soul would stay,  
In such a frame as this,  
And sit and sing herself away,  
To everlasting bliss."

4. Besides these more direct advantages accruing from the study and practice of sacred music, there are others of a more incidental kind, some of which it may be worth while cursorily to mention. And first among these I would place the opportunity afforded by the psalmody of the church for instilling, in an attractive and memorable manner, religious truth into the minds of the people. In every proper hymn or psalm, there is an embodiment of some great principle or idea of a devotional kind; this is set forth in a poetical or at least rhythmical form, and the words thus put together, being sung to an attractive tune, the idea not only comes to be familiar to the mind, but what is of more importance, it comes to be surrounded with agreeable associations, which tend to make us love it, and cling to it. In this way, truth may be almost insensibly fixed in our memories and affections, like a seed cast into the soil, to bear fruit after many days. In regard to the younger and less instructed part of our congregations, especially, may this beneficial result be expected to display itself. It is a well known fact, that in many cases conversion to God has been effected through the medium of hymns conveying into the mind the saving truths of the gospel; and how often has it happened, that the lingering recollection of the psalmody of the church enjoyed in early life, has in after years, amid the throng of worldly cares, or the trials of life, or it may be the seductions of passion, come in to exert a holy and a

balmy influence upon the soul! A distinguished literary lady of the present day, writing lately of Dr. Watts, says, in reference to his hymns for children, "Memories they are of verses learned almost before we could lisp them, but which, second in value only to maxims of Holy Writ, have come to us, like angel's whispers, amid the labours, and trials, and struggles, ay, and amid the pleasures, and triumphs of life." \* With the experience thus gracefully depicted, many, we are sure, will sympathise; and many, also, will feel that besides the verses, some sweet and simple tune, to which they were wont to sing them, has clung to the memory, and, ever and anon, has risen to the ear, demanding for some almost forgotten truth, prompt and hearty notice. In this point of view, how important does the sustaining of an elevated psalmody in our churches appear!

As closely associated with this, may be mentioned the tendency of good psalmody to convey known and acknowledged truths in a forcible and edifying manner into the heart of the Christian. Every one must have felt how prone we are to receive truth with a sluggish acquiescence, and to allow it to fall into a state of dormant inactivity in our minds. Now for this there are few counteractives more influential and simple than psalmody. It rouses the inert spirit, quickens the susceptibilities, stimulates the intellect, and leads to a lively apprehension as well as a cordial appreciation of the truths embodied in the song. "Reason with man," says a judicious writer, "and you do but address his understanding; you gain, it may be, his cold conviction. Embody the truth in a creed or confession of faith, to this he also yields assent, and remains as unconvinced as before. But express it in the sacred song,—let it mingle with his devotions in the sanctuary and in the family,—let his most endeared associations cluster around it as the central point, not only of his faith, but of his hopes, his joys; and what before was a speculative belief, has become a living sentiment, the governing principle both of the understanding and the heart."† An advantage so important as this ought to be eagerly sought after by the people of God, and the greater their tendency to let the truth slip out of their minds, the more anxious should they be to provide a continual restorative in an efficient and well-conducted psalmody, both at the family altar and in the sanctuary.

In fine, we may observe here, that a taste for sacred song has often been the means of propagating and preserving religious truth among the community when otherwise it might have been lost. There can be little doubt that in the primitive days of the church, Christianity owed much to its psalmody both for the promulgation and preservation of its truths among the people; and it may with confidence be asserted, that the primitive hymns in adoration of the Trinity did quite as much to overthrow the heresy of Arius, as the arguments and eloquence of Athanasius. At the Reformation, Luther and his associates made use of this medium for the propagation of their views, and it is a well ascertained fact, that in the Lutheran church spiritual life has been sustained among the people, notwithstanding at one time the almost entire defalcation of the clergy from evangelical truth, by the popular love for

\* Mrs. S. C. Hall, in the "Art Union," for May, 1848.

† Coleman's Church without a Prelate.

psalmody created and diffused by Luther. In England also, who can question the wide-spread influence of the hymns of Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts in diffusing and sustaining a relish for evangelical piety throughout the dissenting community? whilst, on the other hand, it is the liturgy and music of the Church of England which, more than any thing else, have secured to its doctrines the affections and the convictions of the multitude who adhere to its communion; nay, which have often witnessed for these doctrines to the people, when their professed spiritual guides were preaching to them "another gospel." How important, then, that we should not lose hold of this most powerful instrument of evangelical effort! How important that our psalmody should be such as at once to attract men to the consideration of the truth, to instil that truth into their minds, and to provide a channel through which that truth may flow down to coming generations,—a channel which has already exhibited its capacity of continuing free and full when others have been choked up or dried!

If these remarks on the importance of this part of religious worship be just, how inexcusable, how foolish, and how sinful must be the conduct of those who habitually neglect it, as well as of those who attend to it in an indifferent, callous, or perfunctory manner!

An exercise so enjoined upon us, and so adapted to be useful to us, ought to enlist our warmest interest, and be attended to by us with the most scrupulous care. Each individual ought to cultivate whatever spark of musical talent there may be in him; we should all be as solicitous to sing well, as we ought to be to pray well, and a christian congregation ought especially to spare no expense, and leave no efforts untried, to secure for itself proficiency in this exercise. How melancholy to reflect that multitudes in our churches never so much as think of joining in the psalmody,—that many join after a manner that makes all who hear them wish they would hold their peace, and that in hardly any of our congregations is the music more than barely passable, or not positively offensive. These things ought not so to be. We suffer—the cause of truth and of God suffers, because of these things. By our niggardliness or our negligence, we come short of what God has in his wisdom provided for our benefit. And as truth will not triumph in this world if left to its own unaided energies, it is greatly to be feared that the apostles of error, wiser in their own generation than the children of light, may take advantage of our neglect, and thrust us from the field. Oh, that along with a deeper spirit of devotion and piety, there might descend upon the church a holy and zealous determination to find a fitting utterance by which that spirit might express itself in song! Oh, that whilst imitating the sanctity, we might also emulate the song of heaven! Oh, that the daughter of Zion would, as of old, welcome her King with hosannahs worthy of his audience! Then should be fulfilled to her that which is written,—“The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee: He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in his love; He will rejoice over thee with singing.”

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## THE SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

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course by the *right* ones the *wrong* ones. But where, in absence of inspiration, could we find a guarantee for that?—I cannot but still wish that your “trumpet” had given a more “certain sound.” My firm conviction is, that you could yourself have knocked to pieces this “image you have set up” of some species, old or new, of *prelatic superintendence*, much more effectually and thoroughly than I have attempted—may I hope with some little success?—to do it. I wish from my heart you had thus saved me the trouble. With such superintendence, Independency becomes an empty name. It is Independency no longer.—“Who,” you ask, “is entitled to carry these commands into effect, except one holding the same office now as Timothy and Titus held in the apostolic churches? And where is such a one to be found in either a Presbyterian or an Independent church?”—A sensible Irish echo answers, “*No where;*”—and adds, emphatically—“*all the better!*”

Again apologizing for undue encroachment on your room,—unanticipated when I began,—on the ground of its being so very much easier to ask questions and start difficulties in few words, than so to answer and solve them,—believe me, as before, Dear Sir, yours with affectionate esteem,

RALPH WARDLAW.

### LECTURES ON SACRED PSALMODY.

#### LECT. V.—MEANS FOR THE EFFICIENT CONDUCTING OF THE EXERCISE.

IN last Lecture we endeavoured to show the true nature, the high design, and the vast importance of Psalmody in the church. From the remarks then offered, assuming them to be correct and conclusive, it is a natural inference that it is our duty to aim at rendering this department of our public worship as perfect as possible. It can require no

argument to show that an exercise which is designed to further a particular end can be conducive to that design only as it is properly engaged in. Whatever renders it imperfect, whatever detracts from the completeness or the correctness of the performance, must of necessity be so much withdrawn from the fitness of the exercise to produce the intended result, or so much placed as an obstacle in the way of its securing the end designed. It must be evident to all that it is even possible so completely to mar the exercise by the bad performance of it, as to turn it from its proper design altogether, and render it a source of annoyance rather than of benefit. That this has, to a large extent, been the case with our church Psalmody, there is too much reason to believe; and it is certainly not going beyond the bounds of sober truth, to affirm that of the vast spiritual benefits which Psalmody is designed and fitted to convey to the church, the greater part is lost in consequence of the negligent, unskilful, or imperfect manner in which that exercise is conducted in most of our congregations. It is surely time that this great evil were seriously looked into, and a remedy provided for it. It is surely time that all denominations of Christians were applying their energies to this matter, and studiously aiming at placing "the service of song in the house of the Lord" upon a footing worthy of the importance and solemnity of that exercise.

In the present Lecture I propose to offer a few remarks upon the things which ought to be attended to by us, for the purpose of securing an efficient and well-directed Psalmody in our churches. I commence by calling your notice, in the first instance, to the *materials* of our songs of Praise.

In many churches in this part of the country, the only compositions used in public worship are the Bible psalms in the metrical version, and the few paraphrastic versions of passages of scripture appended to that version, by authority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Of this version of the Psalms, taken as a whole, I am not disposed to speak otherwise than respectfully. Viewed as a rythmical version of the entire book of Psalms, it is, in my humble opinion, the best that has yet appeared; it gives most truly and closely the sense of the original; it is almost totally free from those enfeebling paraphrases of the text which disfigure many versions that possess higher claims in a poetical point of view; and it has a firm and manly energy about it that compensates, to a healthy taste, for much of that roughness of versification and rusticity of style of which, not without reason, it has been accused. With a very few alterations, such as the exchange of antiquated phraseology for equivalent expressions better understood in the present day, the completion of defective lines by some other expedient than that of introducing intercalary syllables, the avoiding of full stops in the middle of a line, and the smoothing away of some of the grosser roughnesses which render the reading of them rythmically sometimes a matter of no small difficulty, it might be rendered all that as a version of the Psalter we need desire or can reasonably hope to obtain. As respects the Paraphrases, some of them are amongst the very best, and others amongst the very worst of this class of compositions, which we possess. The English language has no hymns finer than the 2d, the 18th, the 23d, the 58th, or the 66th; but many of the rest are sadly prosaic, some are utterly



unsuited for public worship, and it would not be easy to defend some of them, such for instance as the 17th, the 31st, the 47th, (ver. 2,) and the third hymn, from the charge of teaching unsound and dangerous doctrine.\*

But admitting the general excellence of the Psalms and Paraphrases in use by authority in this country, it may be asked whether it be necessary to *confine* ourselves to these. It may be asked, also, whether the *whole* of the Biblical Psalms are suited, as they stand in the Bible, to the purposes of devotion in the Christian Church. On both these points some, I know, hold a very strong affirmative opinion; judging it almost sinful to sing any other than the metrical psalms, holding that these are to be sung by us Christians in the very form in which they were originally composed, and maintaining that *all* of them are suitable for the purposes of sacred worship. From these views, however, I feel constrained, very decidedly, to dissent. It appears to me that the Psalms supply us with invaluable *ideas* for the exercise of Psalmody, and, that as regards their general conception, they form admirable models of devotional poetry; and I would at once admit that many portions of them—perhaps the larger portion of them—are as fitted for the purposes of Christian, as they could be for those of Jewish Psalmody, and in some cases more so. Whilst, however, I would use such portions in a literal version, I must demur to employing the rest in this form; still more do I demur to being confined to the Psalms in any version, as furnishing the only materials of public Psalmody. It is to be borne in mind, that these Psalms were written by Jews, and, in the first instance, for Jews, and that their whole costume is consequently Jewish. Many of the terms used, many of the figures employed, many of the allusions made, and many of the things uttered, are strictly and exclusively Jewish. In the mouths of Christians these have no meaning, or a very wrong one. Why, then, should Christians employ them? why, most of all, should they be forbidden to employ any other formulæ of praise? Is it not absurd in a christian congregation to address God as if the people were all Jews?—thanking God for mercies they never received, acknowledging sins they never committed, praying for blessings they are incapable of enjoying, imploring God to do things which, if we believe the New Testament, were done by him many centuries ago, and solemnly promising before God that they will perform what every person knows no Christian ever will or can perform? Is it not, for instance, ridiculous to hear a congregation of Scotsmen solemnly singing before God, “By Babel’s streams *we* sat and wept,” when they never were in Babylon in their lives? or asserting that *their* “fathers saw the wonders great” which the Lord wrought in the land of Egypt? or that *their* fathers tempted God in the desert?—as if they were an assembly of converted Jews! Is it not absurd to hear a whole congregation in this country religiously declaring to God:

“Thee, therefore, mind I will  
From Jordan’s land, the Hermonites,  
And even from Mizar hill”—

\* The 17th paraphrase teaches that if men will be just, sincere, and charitable, “*then*,” i.e. as a consequence of that their sins shall be forgiven. In the 31st, substantially the same legalistic doctrine is taught. In the 2d verse of the 47th, we have the doctrine of baptismal regeneration pretty clearly announced; and as for the 3d hymn, it is little better than heathenish throughout.

a declaration which, if it mean any thing, means that they who utter it intend forthwith to go to the Holy Land, and think of God by the banks of the Jordan and in the land of the Hermons; than which they intend nothing less? And what shall we say to believers in Christ promising to offer sacrifice to God, asserting that they will pay their vows in the temple, and beseeching God to send forth the Messiah, as if he had not already come? or what are we to think of those who loudly sing that they will praise God "with cornet, harp, and psaltery," when they know not what these are, or it may be are prepared with the very next breath to denounce all instrumental music in public worship as sinful? It is surely time that the common sense of men was awakened to urge them to get rid of such incongruities and absurdities in the service of God.

Let it not be supposed that I regard these more Judaic parts of the Psalter as useless to us, or even altogether unsuitable for the purposes of devotion. I only object to our using them in a *form which is not appropriate to our circumstances, and which makes our use of them ridiculous*. In attempting "rightly to divide the word of truth," we must ever discriminate between the spirit and the form—the body and the dressing; and also between what any part of Scripture was to those to whom it was first addressed, and what it is to us. The confounding of these has led to much erroneous interpretation of Scripture, and it is just such a confounding of them that lies at the root of the absurdities above exposed. These psalms, as they stand, were quite suited for the ancient Jews; but what was suited for them is not suited for us, and cannot, therefore, be intended for us. Hence, in applying to ourselves these ancient songs, we must divest them of their Jewish costume, and invest them with a christian garb. In all of them there lies some great permanent truth, and this is what it concerns us to seize and retain. It is not the letter which we should be sedulous to preserve, but the spirit; just as Christiauity has retained the essence of Judaism, whilst it has annulled the form. In other words, we should sing these psalms in a version which, without destroying any part of their substance, adapts their language to the circumstances, feelings, prospects, and wants of Christians.

The number of those who would *confine* our Psalmody to the book of Psalms is, I suppose, very small in the present day. The addition of the paraphrases was the admission of the principle that we *might* go beyond the limits of the psalter for the materials of our public songs of praise; and before this principle the prejudices of our countrymen in favour of the exclusive use of the Psalms has been gradually giving way. It may be asked, however, why this principle should not be carried still further, and why we should not avail ourselves of other compositions of human piety and genius, as vehicles of our devotion? If it be lawful and advantageous to use these, why not use a multitude of others equally devout, poetical, and appropriate—in many cases immensely more so? Why follow the lead of Doddridge, Logan, Morrison, and the few others who have furnished these paraphrases, and refuse that of Watts, Wesley, Cowper, Newton, Montgomery, and a goodly band of gifted singers beside? Shall it be said that the superior claim of these paraphrases rests upon the fact that they *are* paraphrases—that the sentiments they contain are not human but divine, being drawn directly from the words

of Scripture? To this I reply, 1. That this collection does not embrace *all* the paraphrases of Scripture in our language; so that even if we are to be confined to paraphrases, it does not follow that we are to be confined to these. 2. That it would be easy to show that many of these paraphrases contain sentiments which are not sanctioned by the passage they profess to paraphrase, nor by any other part of Scripture, so that it by no means follows from their being called "paraphrases of Scripture," that they really contain the sentiments of any but erring men. 3. That in order to fill a hymn with Scriptural sentiment, it is not necessary to make that hymn a paraphrase upon some particular part of Scripture; it is enough if the thoughts expressed be accordant with the teaching of the word of God. 4. That many parts of Scripture, and many of the parts selected by the authors of these paraphrases are not suited for the expression of devotional feeling; many of them being didactic, many admonitory, not a few comminatory; so that paraphrases of them, instead of being alone suitable for Psalmody, are not suitable for Psalmody at all. 5. As praise is the utterance of feelings dwelling in the bosom of the party offering it, it seems altogether reasonable that we should be at liberty to select those hymns which best express our own feelings, wishes, and wants, by whomsoever composed. When the thing to be attained is the just, full, and solemn expression of *our* feelings towards God, of what use is it to employ a form of words which does not really express such feelings, simply because it may happen to be a poetical version of some passage of Scripture? and what absurdity is it to preclude us from the use of another form of words which we feel to be most appropriate to us as a vehicle for our emotions, simply because it does not profess to be a paraphrase upon some particular part of the Bible? If devotion consisted in repeating passages of Scripture, or if Psalmody was designed merely to improve our recollection of Scripture statements, I could conceive some rational ground for the restriction pleaded for; but when it is admitted that devotion is the utterance of pious feeling, and that the design of Psalmody is to deepen and strengthen that feeling by giving it suitable expression, it seems the height of unreasonableness to impose any restrictions upon our choice of the vehicles which we shall employ for that purpose, beyond such as a due regard to the nature and design of the exercise itself demands.

We plead, therefore, for the use of hymns of human composition in our public Psalmody; and for this we think we have the sanction not only of common sense, but as shown in a former Lecture, of the church of the apostles and early christians. In availing ourselves, however, of this liberty, it behoves us to be careful as to the kind of compositions which we employ to give utterance to our feelings of devotion. It is not every religious poem which is adapted to the use of Psalmody; it is not even every pious, Scriptural, and elevated poem that will fitly serve this purpose. A really good hymn is a composition in which a combination of excellencies, partly of a religious, and partly of a literary kind, must be found. Let us mention a few of the more important.

In the first place, It must contain sentiments perfectly accordant with Scriptural truth. Without this it can never suit the feelings of a truly christian mind. In all such minds the fountain of devotion is truth drawn from the word of God. To this truth they stand indebted for

every pious emotion, for every devotional feeling they enjoy. It is by this that they test the *genuineness* of those religious feelings that present themselves to their notice, so as to reject that which is spurious and retain that which is sincere. Unless, therefore, a hymn be such as will abide this test, it can never form a vehicle for the devotion of really pious and intelligent minds. If its sentiments be *contrary* to Scripture, they will reject it with abhorrence; if they be such as Scripture does not clearly *sanction*, they will shun it as dangerous, and more likely to breed a false than to foster a genuine piety. Secondly, A hymn which is to be used in worship, must express directly or indirectly those devotional feelings which it is the object of Psalmody to utter, and the design of Psalmody to strengthen. This follows necessarily from the definition given in last Lecture of the nature and purpose of Psalmody. As Psalmody is the utterance of pious and devout feeling, and as its chief intention is to give strength and vigour to such feeling in the breast of the parties engaging in it, nothing can be more obvious than that a composition which does not express this feeling cannot be adapted for this exercise. Hence all merely didactic, reflective, imaginative, hortatory, or denunciatory poems must be excluded from the number of hymns. These may be very good in their own place; but that place is not the assembly of the people of God met to celebrate his praise. Thirdly, A hymn designed to serve as a vehicle of *public* devotion must express sentiments and feelings suited to a public assembly; in other words, such as the parties assembled may appropriately express in common. This follows naturally from the *community* of the exercise; it is an act, not of individual or private piety, but of public and united worship, and can therefore be appropriately discharged only by means of compositions which express what is common to all the people of God. Hymns, accordingly, expressive of private feeling, or of certain peculiarities of individual experience; hymns for Christians in peculiar circumstances, such as no Christian can be in whilst in the public assembly of his brethren; hymns for the closet, the sick-chamber, the family, and such like,—must all be excluded from our collections of hymns designed for public worship. It may be added, that in the *form* of the hymns also intended for this purpose, it is desirable that regard should be had to the community of the exercise—that the plural, for instance, rather than the singular number should in general be employed when the hymn is in the first person,—and that whatever in allusion, phraseology, or figure, might tend to mar or snperse the perfect *fellowship* of the exercise should be studiously avoided. Hence hymns of high poetical excellence, richly adorned with metaphor and trope, expressed in language removed to a great degree from the language of ordinary life, or dealing in allusions which only the learned are likely to understand, must be pronounced altogether unfit for the use of our public assemblies. In a congregation where the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the learned and the unlearned, the wise and the simple, meet together, the only proper form for all the exercises is that which unites worthiness of conception with simplicity and perspicuity of execution.—Fourthly, A hymn should, as much as possible, be possessed of unity of subject. In this respect a majority of the hymns extant are sadly deficient. To find an appropriate title for many of them is almost

impossible, unless we were to affix the title "*de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.*" From the subject of the first verse no one can possibly conjecture what may be the subjects of the verses that follow. The author rambles on from theme to theme, one knows not how; and then suddenly ends, one knows not why. The process by which such hymns are put together, and the worthlessness of them when complete, are well described by Mr. Montgomery in the following passage:—"They (the authors of them) have begun apparently with the only idea in their mind at the time; another, with little relationship to the former, has been forced upon them by a refractory rhyme; a third became necessary to eke out a verse; a fourth to begin one; and so on, till, having compiled a sufficient number of stanzas of so many lines, and lines of so many syllables, the operation has been suspended; whereas it might, with equal consistency, have been continued to any imaginable length, and the tenth or ten-thousandth link might have been struck out or changed places with any other without the slightest infraction of the chain; the whole being a series of independent verses, collocated as they came, and the burden a cento of phrases, figures, and ideas, the common property of every writer who had none of his own, and, therefore, found in the works of each, unimproved, if not unimpaired, from generation to generation. Such rhapsodies may be sung from time to time, and keep alive devotion already kindled; but they leave no trace in the memory, make no impression on the heart, and fall through the mind as sounds glide through the ear,—pleasant, it may be, in their passage, but never returning to haunt the imagination in retirement, or in the multitude of the thoughts to refresh the soul."\* Happily, though hymns of this class are sufficiently numerous, we are not confined to them. The names of Watts, Doddridge, Cowper, Wesley, and, we rejoice to add, that of Mr. Montgomery himself, are sufficient to remind us, that when all this mass of dross and rubbish is swept away, a precious residuum of pure gold will remain, out of which to enrich our collections and feed our devotion. Many valuable hymns, also, by writers of less note than those just named, are within our reach—hymns which the purest taste, and the most fervid devotion would combine to approve. Of these, and such as these, our selections for public use should chiefly consist.

(To be continued.)

#### PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF JONAH.—No. IV.

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? (for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.) And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea; and the sea ceased from her raging."—JONAH i. 11—15.

JONAH has made confession of his sin, after being marked out by the special interposition of God as the guilty person on whose account the

\* Christian Psalmist, Introd. Essay, p. 15.

tempest had been raised. He did not confess his sin, however, until it could no longer be concealed; and, strongly inclined as we feel to take the most favourable view of his character, we can hardly do him the credit of supposing that he was, as yet, truly penitent. There is a cold, heartless, acknowledgment of sin, extorted by the fear or by the fact of discovery, which manifests great meanness of spirit, and bespeaks a deceitfulness lurking within, which would fain blind the eyes of observers, and avert the consequences of transgression, while the spirit of transgression is cherished still.

It is true that we require not, in all cases, to confess our sin to man. Only when we have injured man is this necessary. But the working of the same principle may be observed in our confessions to God. And oh! how different is such a heartless and extorted acknowledgment, from the melting and ingenuous confession of him who has been pricked to the heart by a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of his sin in fleeing from the presence of a God, whose name, whose nature, whose every act, and every word, is love:—a love the deepest, the strongest, the most disinterested:—a love which depends not for its exercise on the worthiness of its objects, but flows forth, richly and freely, towards the wretched and the vile:—a love which knows no end, no measure, no change, no interruption, no diminution:—a love which yearns over the lost, the wandering, the disobedient; and woos them, by the tenderest and most winning solicitations, to return to their Father's house and live. The closet of the man who, feeling that he has sinned against such a God, goes to confess his transgression, is a scene around which angels delight to hover. See the conscience-stricken penitent! He is on his knees—alone with God. The dark mantle of night is cast over him. No eye sees him except that night-dispelling eye, before which hell is naked, and destruction hath no covering. His heart is full, too full for utterance. The bursting sobs, which overcome every effort to stifle them, tell of the raging of a tempest of grief within. He cannot even look up, but falling prostrate before the mercy seat of the Holy One, he lies down in his shame, and his confusion covers him. At length the soul's sorrow finds vent. The trickling tear steals down the pallid cheek. The averted eye is raised to heaven. From the bursting heart there breaks forth the language of penitence and prayer:—"Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son." "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me." These penitential breathings of the contrite soul enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. The love-subdued suppliant is accepted and forgiven. All heaven rings with joyous acclamation. On their golden harps the bright inhabitants of the celestial city strike a higher note of praise, and sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Whatever may have been the case with Jonah;—whether his confession sprung from a broken and contrite spirit or otherwise, would it not be well if each reader were to pause here, and ask himself, "How is it with me in this respect? Do I know any thing of this 'godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation?' Have I ever been



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have little doubt to a resuscitation of the influence of Popery. Whither can the people look in their nascent aspirations after a religion, but to the only form of religion which is ostensibly alive and active among them? Protestantism is in France a mere dead carcass—a thing that is, but acts not. It has long been inoperative; it has now become despicable. The recent proceedings of the synod of France have proclaimed to the world that the Protestant church in that country is in a state of the most pitiable decrepitude—not able to comprehend itself—timid and cringing before its adversaries, and without even the pretence of any positive creed or internal bond of union.\* To the inquiring mind or the earnest heart, such a church is utterly repulsive. On the other hand, Romanism is alive, alert, plausible, attractive. Her agents, ever watchful, see their advantage at present, and are promptly seizing it. The heroic conduct of the late Archbishop of Paris during the recent struggle is a great card, which they know well how to play. It would be idle to doubt the immense effect which that Prelate's death has produced on the Parisian mind. Call his conduct foolhardy if you please, censure as you like the sort of dramatic ostentation with which he affronted his fate; still there is no denying the nobleness of his purpose, or the grandeur of his fall. In the estimation of the Parisians he died as a martyr in the cause of peace. Already they reverence him as a saint. Whilst his body lay in state, they crowded in thousands to bow before it and pray; in one day not fewer than 100,000 persons thus offered their homage to his memory; nor could medals be struck fast enough to meet the demand for such memorials of his heroism. In the senate he was spoken of as "the sainted martyr;" at their first meeting after his death the members passed with acclamation the following resolution:—"The National Assembly regards it as a duty to express the sentiment of religious gratitude and of profound grief for the devotion and the saintly-heroic death of the Archbishop of Paris;" and

\* After a protracted discussion, the synod lately came to the conclusion that it is impossible to say what constitutes a man a member of the Protestant church of France. Not baptism, not a belief in the Trinity or the atonement, not a reception of the Bible as inspired, or of Christianity as divine, not joining at the communion! A man has but to say, "I am a member," and a member he is; so that, as M. Monod told his brethren, If a Jew, a heathen, or an infidel, for some purpose of his own, choose to say he is a member of the French church, he is so, and may act in their consistory, or vote in their synod.

in the Chamber of Deputies, the republican assembly of infidel France, extraordinary honours were decreed to his memory. Hear also in what terms so worldly an affair as the *Journal des Debats* speaks of him. "The apostle of the God of peace, of mercy and of pardon, he went to carry the cross and the sign of reconciliation into the midst of murder and of carnage. He fell upon the very scene of conflict; and one may say, that in pity to humanity God has been pleased to conceal in darkness the hand which committed either that horrible crime or that frightful accident. In view of that sublime sacrifice, Christian hearts will be divided between a sentiment of holy pride and one of inconsolable grief. The history of the church offers no more admirable page. Borne away bleeding across the barricades, the sole thought, the only word of the martyr was, 'May my blood be the last shed!' Ushered into the presence of his Maker, the immortal soul of the just has doubtless asked the reward of his oblation and holocaust, and his prayers have arrested the work of blood and of expiation. After having, in the midst of so many others, struck that innocent and holy victim, one may say that at length Death grew weary. . . . The venerable prelate died full of calm resignation and courage—the purest and most perfect example of the just in the bosom of God." To every person of a correct taste and of sincere piety, this rhodomontade cannot but be disgusting; but it serves to show the turn which the Parisian mind is at present taking, and the effect which the Archbishop's death has had upon the populace. In all probability he will be forthwith canonized; and it may become as fashionable in France to invoke this new saint as in days of old it was to call upon St. Denis the "columen regni," or Sainte Genevieve the "prosperum Francis jubar." In the meanwhile the priests are celebrating masses, and performing various ceremonies in honour or for the safety of the departed prelate, whilst their most eloquent orators are making his virtues and martyrdom the theme of their impassioned appeals.\* Whilst all this is going on, poor Protestantism stands silent, or is active only to proclaim its own weakness and degradation. The sole hope for the once flourishing church of France at present seems to be in a restoration of the Romish tyranny, and a second revocation of the edict of Nantes.

(To be continued.)

## LECTURES ON THE PSALMODY OF THE CHURCH.

### LECTURE V. CONCLUDED.

AFTER the materials of our public psalmody comes the *music* as the next subject of consideration. Here I shall confine myself to such remarks as one who makes no pretensions to any scientific knowledge or artistic skill in music may be permitted to offer.

The primary requisite in every thing that is used as an instrument of public devotion is *appropriateness* to the nature and design of the exercise

\* I perceive that the French Academy has just announced a prize of 2000 francs for the best poem on the death of the Archbishop.

for which it is employed ; and this is equally true of the music of our psalmody as of the other parts of our service. Now for this purpose it ought in the first place to be *simple*. I mean by this that it should be such as all persons who are disposed to join in the exercise may be enabled with an ordinary degree of endowment and attention to follow. Where the object is not to afford opportunity for a few skilful performers to exhibit their powers, but to unite a whole congregation in one harmonious strain, simplicity is an indispensable requisite. Nice turns of musical expression, intricate combinations of notes, elaborate and florid harmonies, passages requiring unusual compass of voice, or rapidity of execution, however much they may draw forth the applause of the instructed musician, are emphatically to be condemned when introduced into compositions intended for a promiscuous congregation. To ask such to join in a tune which only an accomplished musician can understand, and a practised vocalist can sing, is in reality as great an offence against propriety as it would be in the preacher to ask them to attend to a discourse in Greek or Hebrew, or on some subject which they could not possibly comprehend. In the christian church all must be for profit, nothing for display ; and as profit in psalmody depends upon the part taken in it by the people, whatever tends to exclude them from their share in the exercise is a great evil, and ought to be studiously avoided.

2dly, The tunes used should be *distinguished by musical merit*. In pleading for simplicity, I should be sorry to be thought an advocate for poverty or meagreness in our sacred melodies. On the contrary, I believe that not only may simplicity and richness be united, but that it is often essential to the latter that the former be preserved. The melodies of our older composers appear to me distinguished by a prevailing simplicity, and yet how pure and how rich the music they contain ! To my ear there are few tunes finer or more impressive than Luther's Old Hundred, or Milton's tune commonly entitled York, or Dr. Croft's St. Ann's, or Purcell's St. John's, or our old Scottish melody Martyrdom ; and yet these are tunes which every person in a congregation may easily follow who can sing at all. There is no need, therefore, for our sacrificing richness in order to secure simplicity ; and as it is of importance that our music should ever be the best possible, we should cultivate those tunes which, without being complicated and difficult, embody the largest measure of true melody and music. And here, even at the risk of venturing beyond my depth, I will offer a general criticism upon modern church tunes, which applies I think to many of them, though not certainly to all, and which appears to me to describe the *tendency* of our recent composers. It is this, that they seem to attend more to the harmony of their tunes than to their melody ; at least I cannot help thinking that they treat us not unfrequently to compositions which present a very thin and meagre air set out with an unbounded garnishing of florid counterpoint in the harmonising of the parts. I offer this opinion with diffidence, being a mere sciolist in the musical art, and judging of the merit of tunes entirely by the ear ; but such is the impression that has been made upon me by listening to many of our more modern tunes. If this impression be correct, the tendency is one which is to be regretted, for after all it is the melody and not the harmony which constitutes the essence of the music ; and a poor melody

floridly harmonised, appears to me very much like to a meagre discourse set forth in a flourish of words—an empty thing in spite of its fine appearance—a sort of aesthetic fop whom nobody would endure to look at if it were not for his fine clothes. 3dly, Our church tunes *ought to possess a church character*. There is a *style* in music as well as in all other kinds of composition, and this style ought to be adapted to the design and character of the exercise in which the music is employed. Now just as a psalm tune would be out of place if sung to a festive air, or a light and sparkling arrietta would be felt to be offensive if played at a funeral, so in the music of the church, it is a violation of all taste and propriety to introduce tunes of a character unsuited to the gravity, solemnity and dignity of the exercise. In the church we sing to the praise of God, uttering such sentiments as the consideration of his greatness and goodness may have kindled in our minds; and the only music appropriate for this is such as excites emotions of a serious or elevated kind in the soul. Every thing light, airy, fantastic, or showy should be studiously abjured in our public psalmody. The march of our music should be dignified, the intonation full, the expression solemn and reverential. I do not mean by this, that we should always sing slow tunes, or that they should always be of a plaintive cast; by no means; all that I mean is, that our music should not transgress the limits which separate the psalm-tune from the song-tune, and that we should keep by the kind of music which nature and use have established as the proper kind for ecclesiastical purposes. The practice of adapting secular tunes to sacred purposes, though pleaded for and practised by some, I cannot help regarding, with the present Gresham Professor of Music as “a reprehensible practice.” 4thly, It would be of great advantage to our public psalmody if *all our people would learn to sing church music*. “As it is the command of God,” says the great and good Jonathan Edwards, “that all should sing, so all should make conscience of *learning* to sing, as it is a thing which cannot be decently performed at all without learning.”\* On this obvious truth it is surely unnecessary to enlarge. I would only observe, that it is deeply to be regretted that christian parents often utterly neglect this in the training of their children. They will expend large sums perhaps in order to teach them all kinds of music *except* this; as if the singing of worldly (often very silly, sometimes worse than silly) airs were a worthier occupation for the children of the professed people of God, than the singing of tunes appropriate to the worship of the heavenly majesty. It were much to be desired that this evil habit were relinquished, and that the children of christian families were as conscientiously taught to sing God’s praises as they are taught to read his word. The effect of this upon our public psalmody would soon be felt to be most beneficial. 5thly, It were much to be desired *that our congregations would sing in parts, and that each person would take the part for which his voice is most fitted*. In all mixed congregations there are usually four distinct classes of voice, which may be popularly discriminated as 1, that of women and children; 2, that of boys; 3, that of men with high voices; and 4, that of men with low voices. Now, He who gave these different kinds of voices, doubtless designed

\* Sermon on Self Examination.

that in singing his praises all should be used in such a way as by their harmony to produce a greater effect; and it is in accordance with this that our tunes are harmonised. Each person, therefore, should sing what his or her voice is adapted to sing; otherwise the design of Providence in giving these different voices is not responded to. The air or melody should be sung by the women and children; the tenor by the men with high voices; the counter tenor by boys, *i.e.*, lads between twelve and seventeen; and the bass by men with deep voices. In this way each would contribute to the general harmony, whereas when all sing the air, or persons attempt a part for which they have no voice, the effect is most unhappy and discordant.\* 6thly, I greatly desire *the restoration to our churches of the chant, and along with that the use of the organ* in our public psalmody. The chant is the true, proper, and original church music—the sole music of the Jewish church from first to last, and the sole music of the christian church for many centuries at least of its existence. It has a devotional and a musical power in it which no metrical psalmody can ever be expected to possess, and as in using it we use the pure and unparaphrased words of Scripture, I can conceive no objection, on the ground of principle, to its being resumed by us. To do it effectually, however, we must call in the aid of instrumental music, and here, I suppose, lies the obstacle with the majority. But why should this be an obstacle? What is there in the use of the solemn and majestic tones of the organ, invoked for the purpose of aiding us in our singing, that should fill people with dismay and make them recoil with horror? It cannot be said that the use of instrumental music, in the service of God, is in *itself* sinful, for we know that God himself expressly enjoined it upon the Jews, which clearly exempts it from this charge. Why then should it not be employed by us? Let us glance at the objections usually urged against it. It is said that it is incompatible with the simplicity and spirituality of New Testament worship. Then I beg to ask, In what way? How is it that the simplicity and spirituality of New Testament worship is infringed upon by our singing along with an organ any more than by our singing without the organ? I am unable, for my part, to discover where the alleged evil here is supposed to lurk. If the objectors would take the ground of the Quakers and repudiate all singing except in the silence of the heart, I could understand them; but when they say we may sing tunes in which we are led by a precentor, because that is simple and spiritual, but we may not sing tunes in which we are led by an instrument, because that is not simple and spiritual, they use reasoning which, I confess, I cannot understand. Do they mean to say that the spirituality of an exercise depends upon the leader, and not upon the state of mind of the parties engaging in it?

\* I would take this opportunity of recommending to my readers the following works on church music. *The National Psalmody, a selection of Tunes for the use of Churches, Families, and Schools. Prepared under the superintendence of George Hogarth, Esq. With a short and easy practical guide to Psalm-singing.* By Thomas L. Hatley, Precentor to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. — *Devotional and Congregational Psalmody, with Instructions in Psalmody.* By the Rev. J. J. Waite. — *The Art of Singing at Sight Simplified.* By Samuel Barr, Professor of Vocal Music at Queen's College and the Glasgow Mechanics' Institution. 2d edition. — *School Music, arranged for three voices.* By George Hogarth, Esq., and edited by John Curwen.

Do they intend to teach, that if I simply, sincerely, and with my whole heart sing to God a song of praise, in the music of which I am aided by an instrument, I do not thereby as truly praise him as if I sung without any such aid? or would they have us to believe that if we only follow a godly precentor, it matters not what be the state of our own hearts while we sing? If they do not mean any of these things by their objection, what *do* they mean by it. To me it seems irrelevant or unintelligible. I am as anxious as any man can be for simplicity and spirituality of worship, but these must exist in the heart of the worshipper, and unless it can be shown that the use of instruments, as an aid to our music, is calculated, necessarily, to destroy this state of heart, the objection to them now under notice, must be regarded as altogether frivolous.

But, it is said, the use of the organ is a departure from that apostolic practice to which we are bound to adhere. Now, it is, of course, at once conceded, that there were no organs in the churches of the apostles; but were there no psalteries, no harps, no lyres? and if they used the latter, which are but very imperfect instruments, why may we not use the former, which is altogether adapted to the purpose in view? Or even admitting that they had no instruments of *any* kind in their service, does it follow from this that *we* must have none? Are we to be precluded from availing ourselves of any advance in the arts and sciences of civilised life, simply because the apostles, in their day, wanted such advantages? An organ, be it observed, is simply an instrument for assisting a congregation to sing. Its use is not the introducing of a new *kind* of worship into the church; it is merely the employment of a *more perfect mode* of conducting what has from the beginning formed part of the public worship of God. To forbid this on the ground that it was unknown to the apostles, seems to me to be extremely unreasonable. Why may we not use every help (which is in itself innocent) for the purpose of more efficiently performing the service of God? For my part, I should as soon think of forbidding the minister to use spectacles to help him to read, because the apostles did not use them, as forbid the congregation to use an organ to help them to sing, because organs were unknown in the apostolic church.—Besides, how far is this sort of objection to be allowed to carry us? Are we to reject every thing in our churches which we do not find the apostolic churches had? I should hope not. In the apostolic meeting houses there were no pews: are we, therefore, to constrain our congregations to stand, or bring their seats with them? In the apostolic churches it cannot be proved that there was a sermon preached regularly, by the minister, on the Lord's day: are we, therefore, to dispense with the preaching of sermons? In the apostolic churches it is pretty certain that there was no precentor to lead the singing, no metrical psalms or hymns to sing, no tunes to which to sing them: are we, therefore to dispense with all these? I need ask no more. I have said enough to show the absurdity of this appeal to apostolic practice. Let the objector be consistent, and when he has reduced his own practice to what he can adduce apostolic authority in support of, it will be time enough for us to consider the expediency of following his example. \*

\* I cannot say I have much respect for the cry so frequently in the mouths of



"But organs are Popish," I hear some one exclaim, "and would you bring in among us the scarlet abominations of Antichrist?" No, verily, I would do nothing of the sort; but allow me to remind the objector, that *all* is not antichristian which is found among the practices of the Papists. Grant that they introduced the organ, I would say, If this is in itself a benefit to the church, we ought to be very much obliged to them for it, and use it gladly. And how many things, I pray you, are of Popish invention which we are in the continual habit of following without scruple? The clothing of ministers in an official dress, the use of the gothic architecture for our places of worship, the ringing of bells to summon the people to church, as well as a multitude of other things, including metrical psalms and psalm tunes, are all to be traced to the Popish church for their origin. Why then should this be an objection to the use of an organ in our church exercises? If the thing be good and useful let us have it, whoever may have invented it, and by whomsoever it may be used.

I believe many good people have a fear that were organs introduced the effect would be to substitute instrumental for vocal music—and that what are called "fine pieces" would take the place of our present tunes in which we all can join. In the feeling which dictates this fear, I fully join; but for the fear itself I can see no real ground. I believe that there is much less dread of our being misled into unwholesome novelties by an organ, than by a band or even by some precentors. I have known cases where instrumental music was strictly excluded, but where the singing was confined entirely to a few trained performers, and sounded far more like a theatrical exhibition than a celebration of the praises of God. And I have heard of precentors who took it much amiss if any person sung but themselves. On the other hand, I could point to innumerable instances—those of our sister churches in England, for instance—where the use of the organ is found to be of the greatest benefit in both inducing and helping the whole congregation to sing. I would never propose to use it for any other purpose. I advocate it simply as an aid to the singing of the people. Believing that good singing and spiritual vitality are closely associated, I am studious to promote the former for the sake of the latter, and it is for the promotion of the former alone that I advocate the use of the organ. To employ this instrument for any other purpose in the house of God than that of guiding the singing of the people, I hold to be highly improper. Let it be

some about apostolic example, especially when they urge the want of it as a barrier in the way of adopting any manifest improvement in our polity or our practice. I am always suspicious of a principle which those adducing it shrink from fairly and fully carrying out in their own practice; and I find that this is remarkably the case with the principle in question. After all, people just take as much of apostolic practice as suits their convenience or sense of expediency. In regard to the case before us, I have heard individuals loudly demanding apostolic sanction for the use of instrumental music in the church, who were all the while in the continual use of modes of worship, and arrangements of service, as unknown to the apostles as they were to the Saxons of the Heptarchy. Can such people expect us to submit to a principle which they set us the pattern of trampling under foot? Do they imagine we do not see through the flimsy pretence that covers their real feeling? Do they think us so stupid as not to see that it is not reverence for apostolic authority, but pitiful prejudice, or a dread of departing from the beaten track, that prompts their cry?

remembered, moreover, that the people have always the instrument under their control as much as they have any other leader of their music. The organ will not play of itself; "a voluntary," after all is, as far as the instrument is concerned, as compulsory as any other tune; and if a congregation has power to direct the precentor to sing for their guidance, they have the same power to direct the organist to play for their guidance. In fact, if we had an organ in this place, the arrangements for our psalmody would remain exactly under the same kind of control as they are now. The precentor would still have the fixing of the tunes and the general directing of the music; the only difference would be, that instead of the congregation being dependant for guidance in the tune, solely upon his voice, they would have, in addition to that, the steady, unfaltering, commanding tones of the instrument, both to sustain the tune and regulate the time. I cannot, therefore, apprehend the least danger of our singing being superseded by an organ playing tunes which we cannot follow, or of its indulging in performances unsuited to the purpose for which it has been erected. If any such symptoms of insubordination should occur, we have a responsible party, in the shape of an organist, to deal with, whom we should have exactly the same power of controlling as we have in the case of any other functionary we employ. I say, then, I wish the churches in this part of the kingdom would lay aside their prejudices and consent to introduce the organ into their places of worship. I cannot help anticipating that the best results would flow from this step were it once taken. The accompaniment of the instrument would have an effect upon our public psalmody of the most beneficial kind, by at once improving its character, increasing our interest in it, and elevating our feelings regarding it.

I have now finished this short course of Lectures; my object in which has been to deepen your convictions of the importance of sacred music, and to excite you to more reverential and earnest efforts for its improvement amongst us. May that gracious God who has made us capable of singing his praises, give his blessing to this attempt, and fit us all ever more and more, for celebrating his praises in his heavenly temple.

W. L. A.

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## Editorial.

1ST OCTOBER, 1848.

EDINBURGH ANNUITY TAX.—Edinburgh has lately been the scene of some very strange and not very creditable proceedings, in reference to that detestable impost under which the inhabitants suffer—the Annuity Tax. We took no notice of them at the time, as we did not wish to utter our sentiments whilst the feelings excited by the transactions were still rankling in the bosoms of the conflicting parties; but as these may be supposed to be now in some measure calmed, we seize the opportunity in order to utter a few truths that appear to us of importance in reference to such strifes. These may not be very palatable to the extreme men on either side, but perhaps may be of some use to those who would take a composed and rational view of the case.

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## CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF SCOTLAND.

**T**HE THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING of this INSTITUTION will be held in GLASGOW, on TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, and THURSDAY, the 4th, 5th, and 6th days of APRIL.

### ON TUESDAY, 4th,

The GENERAL COMMITTEE of the GLASGOW THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY, will meet in the Academy Room, (behind Nile-Street Chapel,) at 12 o'clock, noon, for the transaction of business. This Meeting is open to the Pastors of all the Churches supporting the Academy.

A MEETING of the GENERAL BOARD of the CHAPEL DEBT LIQUIDATION SCHEME, will be held in the Academy Room, at 2 o'clock, p.m.

A PUBLIC MEETING of the Friends of the ACADEMY will be held in Nicolson-Street Chapel, at 7 o'clock in the evening.

### ON WEDNESDAY, 5th,

A MEETING for PRAYER will be held in Nile-Street Chapel, at half-past 7 o'clock, a.m.

The PRELIMINARY MEETING of the CONGREGATIONAL UNION will be held in Nile-Street Chapel, at 11 o'clock, a.m. This Meeting is open to Pastors and Members of Churches connected with the Union.

A SOCIAL MEETING will be held in the TRADES' HALL, GLASSFORD-STREET, in the evening. Chair to be taken at 6 o'clock.

### ON THURSDAY, 6th,

A MEETING for PRAYER will be held in Nile-Street Chapel, at half-past 7 o'clock, a.m.

A PUBLIC BREAKFAST will be held in the MERCHANTS' HALL, HUTCHESON-STREET, at half-past 8 o'clock, a.m.

The SERMON will be preached by the REV. DR. PAYNE of Plymouth, (Delegate from the Congregational Union of England and Wales,) in North Hanover-Street Chapel. Service to commence at 12 o'clock, noon.

The PUBLIC MEETING of the CONGREGATIONAL UNION will be held in George-Street Chapel, in the evening. Chair to be taken at 6 o'clock.

Tickets for the Social Meeting (1s. 6d.) and for the Public Breakfast (2s.) may be had of Mr. MacLehose, 83 Buchanan-Street; Mr. Gallie, 99 Buchanan-Street; Mr. Duncan Stewart, 184 Trongate; and Mr. John Neil, 69 South Portland-Street.

W. SWAN, *Secretary*.

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## INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR GUARDING THE RIGHTS OF CONGREGATIONAL DISSENTERS.

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**A**T a Meeting held in Edinburgh, on 22d June, 1847, by brethren connected with the Congregational Churches in the City and neighbourhood, for the purpose of considering what steps should be taken towards forming a Denominational Committee to guard our Civil Rights as Congregational Dissenters,—it was suggested and received by all as exceedingly desirable, that an Interim Committee for attending to this matter should be chosen from among the brethren in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee,—and that the Committee should draw up a PLAN OF PERMANENT ORGANIZATION, and lay it before a meeting of the Congregationalists of Scotland, to be held for that purpose in the month of April, 1848.

The Committee, therefore, request a meeting of brethren on the 5th April, at Two o'clock, p.m. in Nile-Street Chapel, Glasgow, when a draft of the basis of permanent organization will be submitted for their consideration.

JAMES M'LAREN, *Chairman*.  
JOHN STEWART, *Secretary*.



